

AN ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 40-44:23
UTILIZING THE CREATION ↔ REDEMPTION MODEL
OF THE CREATOR-KING AND PROCESS THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation is to provide support for the Old Testament theological paradigm of the Creator-King which was proposed by Loren Fisher in 1965. To accomplish this task, I have marshalled an argument which sets Old Testament studies and some recent movements in Old Testament studies within the cultural dualism that has pervaded Western European thought since Descartes. The method proposed by this project overcomes the dualistic bifurcation of nature and history in Old Testament exegesis by utilizing the conjunctions of the Creator-King theological model of Fisher and process theology and of rhetorical criticism and a process historiography. Fisher's original thesis of a creation-redemption model of the Creator-King has been modified to creation↔redemption. This modification is based on my understanding of process theology. Fisher's theological model is compared with other scholars' interpretations of early Hebrew history and also applied to Exodus 15:1-18.

Next, the relationship of creation and redemption in the interpretations of II Isaiah given by several Old Testament scholars is compared with the Creator-King, creation↔redemption language of the control of the limits of the water cycle. The distinctive Creator-King and process theological emphasis is that creation and redemption are not temporally separate acts of God.

Before the actual exegesis, I consider two problems with the unity of II Isaiah. The process historiography provides the philosophical basis for the claim that Isaiah 40-55 can be read as the

unified literary expression of a past subject, II Isaiah. It also functions to illumine particular passages wherein non-human subjects are invited to respond or are portrayed as responding to the activity of Yahweh. The first problem is that of methodological approach. The rhetorical critical method of exegesis is adopted as an eclectic approach which allows for an overall thematic unity while recognizing the form critical emphases of genre and structure analysis. The second problem is that of the servant and the servant songs in II Isaiah. I agree with the position of Leroy Waterman that the identity of the servant is Israel, but that Israel must be described in individual terms.

All of these considerations are funneled into the exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 and the results successfully establish the possibility of using the Creator-King theological paradigm in the exegesis of II Isaiah. The creation↔redemption thesis is then applied indirectly to the elders and the "spiritual life" of the First Christian Church in Riverside, California.

PREFACE

This study was undertaken to add additional support to the theological paradigm of the "Creator-King" that has been presented to Old Testament studies by Loren Fisher. Although the articles which outline the relationships of this paradigm to Ugaritic studies and to Old Testament studies were published in 1965, the attempts made by scholars to appropriate this model in the exegesis of Old Testament texts have been negligible. The basic objective of the following dissertation will be to utilize the "Creator-King" paradigm, in a slightly modified form, in the exegetical "analysis" of Isaiah 40-44:23.

The initial focus in Chapter 1 will set Old Testament studies in the context of the Western European thought of the past several centuries. A description of the effects of a dualistic perspective, which has roots in the cultural milieu from Descartes through Kant, will be sketched. But within philosophy and within Old Testament studies there have been some recent movements away from interpretations which bifurcate reality into separate realms. Several of these movements will be described in an effort to show their compatibility with the Creator-King paradigm. In Chapter 2, it will be necessary to explain Fisher's thesis and compare it briefly to the dominant interpretation of the Baal texts and of their relationship to early Hebrew history. Next, I will contrast Fisher's creation-redemption thesis with the creation↔redemption thesis proposed in this study. The creation↔redemption model of the Creator-King is a modification of Fisher's thesis which is based on my understanding of process theology. The second chapter will conclude with a description

of the themes of the Baal type in Ex. 15:1-18 as they were adapted by the early Hebrews.

Chapter 3 clarifies the relationship of creation and redemption in the interpretations of II Isaiah. The creation↔redemption emphasis of the Creator-King will be contrasted with the interpretations given by James Muilenburg, Claus Westermann and Carroll Stuhlmueller. The distinctive Creator-King emphasis is that creation and redemption are not temporally separate acts of Yahweh.

This chapter will also describe how Yahweh's control of the limits of the water cycle can be applied in the exegesis of Isaiah 40:-44:23 to illustrate the creation↔redemption activity of the Creator-King.

Prior to the actual exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23, Chapter 4 will consider two problems concerning the unity of II Isaiah. The first of these problems concerns the methodological approach used in the exegetical task. The method of rhetorical criticism is accepted as an approach which allows for the consideration of an overall thematic unity while recognizing the form critical, structural emphasis of genres. The second barrier is the debate over the identity of the servant in the "servant songs" and in the remainder of II Isaiah. I will examine the various proposals that have been made and agree with Leroy Waterman that the identity of the servant is Israel, but that Israel must be described and called in individual terms.

The exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 in Chapter 5 incorporates into its analysis the proposals made in the previous chapters. The objective of this chapter is to establish the possibility of using the

Creator-King theological paradigm in the exegesis of II Isaiah. The exegetical approach proposes textual divisions, notes important Hebrew words and phrases, gives structure analyses and genres, and gives a short commentary on the relevant exegetical and theological importance of each smaller unit. The chapter will conclude by summarizing the gains made by utilizing the Creator-King paradigm in the exegesis.

In Chapter 6, the application of my thesis of the creation↔ redemption of the Creator-King will be made indirectly to a current situation in the First Christian Church of Riverside, California. During the summer of 1976, the First Christian Church was in a period of turmoil and unrest. Various vocal and written objections were made to the elders about certain church policy and program and against some of the church staff. The elders considered these objections with an openness to all opinions and the situation was quieted, but not all of the tension was relieved. The final chapter of this study presents a report on the indirect application of the Creator-King thesis through the study of II Isaiah as background preparation for a series of two elders meetings. The potential relevance of this scripture lies in its possible influence on the discussion of the situation confronting the elders--the "spiritual life" of the church. This chapter presents an overall assessment and plan for integrating the concept of servanthood found in the message of II Isaiah and, indirectly, the Creator-King thesis into the discussion of the more immediate problems facing the elders. The "lesson plans" for each meeting are included along with a summary of each meeting and an evaluation of the effect that the concept of servanthood (and the Creator-King thesis) of II Isaiah had on

the consequences of the meetings.

I suppose that every great personal adventure "begins" with some originating impetus: A small group of six or eight students and a teacher were gathered around a table discussing Gerhard von Rad's article, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation."¹ Near the end of the session, John Worrell queried, "Why did 'creation' become independent so late?" I cannot remember any answers that were given. Von Rad had asserted several reasons, but none of them had satisfied me. I recall that I left that session with the intuitive feeling that a developed notion of creation was not late on the scene of Israel's history. Indeed, I felt, and feel to this day, that those people who stood on the east shore of the Reed Sea after the exodus crossing believed that Yahweh was Creator. I could not then give rational reasons for my feelings. This is one of my pre-suppositions and it has led me far afield in search of the pieces of the puzzle that might allow me to tell the history of Israel in a different way.

This study, which is the current outcome of this adventure, has been nourished by many positions and perspectives. My own interests in Biblical Theology and philosophical theology have intersected in this analysis of II Isaiah. These interests have been cross-fertilized by the works of two of my teachers, who were also on my committee--Loren R. Fisher and John B. Cobb, Jr. Both of these men have aided me in

¹Gerhard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of The Old Testament Doctrine of Creation," in his The Problem of the Hexateuch (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 131-43.

sharpening and clarifying the relationships and issues involved in interrelating these two fields. The results of this study point to some areas of compatibility in their theological paradigms. Bob Arnott was the third member of my committee. His Old Testament background deeply enriched my understanding of and appreciation for the work and life of James Muilenburg. All three of the members of my committee assisted me in relating the Creator-King thesis to the practical application of this project. Without their consistent and cooperative efforts, this study would have been a much more difficult task.

I am deeply indebted to many other persons for their assistance, caring support and sustained efforts in helping me to finish this project. My typists have worked under the pressure of deadlines and handwritten manuscripts in their efforts to produce the three drafts of this project. I am deeply grateful to Dottie Miller who typed the first two drafts and gave of her time and energy, grammatical expertise, and concern to help me meet the deadlines. Mary Anne Parrott and Kathy Hutton also responded to the pressure of the final deadline by extending a willing effort of their time and interested concern.

This study could not have been completed without the many instances of assistance, loving concern and support that I have received from my family in Riverside, California, and from my parents. Without their efforts over the past two year period, I would not have been able to focus my interests so that I could complete this project. I am very grateful for the caring support that I received from my wife, Shirley. Shirley, just naturally, would never separate between the natural and the human. She feels the unity of the human and non-human world.

Her understanding has supported my efforts to describe the way in which dualistic perspectives have distorted our reading of the Old Testament.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. CULTURAL DUALISM IN THE WEST SINCE DESCARTES
AND ITS EFFECT UPON OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

It has long been evident that one of the basic characteristics of Western European culture since the seventeenth century is a pervasive dualistic vision which sets humankind apart from the natural world. This kind of separation finds historical roots in the distinction between "souls" and "nature" in the dialogues of Plato. But the most recent rise of the dominance of such a dualistic vision comes from the widely accepted influence of René Descartes and his analysis of human subjectivity. Descartes separated reality into "mental" or "thinking" substances, and "physical" or "extended" substances. As this distinction gained popular acceptance by the rising middle class and intelligentsia throughout Europe, other philosophers assumed this distinction and carried it over into their own philosophies. John Locke utilized the distinction between "human understanding" and "external" objects in his explanation of human experience. Locke supposed the human mind began as a blank tablet which receives the impressions of ideas. Locke accepted his understanding of external objects from Galilei Galileo and Isaac Newton.¹ Immanuel Kant developed a different form of dualism by distinguishing the "noumena" from "phenomena."

¹Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 244-5.

Throughout this development the overarching dualistic contrast was between mind and matter. Descartes had defined substance as requiring nothing but itself in order to exist. The world of nature was presumed to be a self-sufficient material order while the human mind was a substance of a different order. Among the consequences of such a dualistic separation of mind and matter has been a bifurcation of "kinds" of experience, rather than degrees of complexity of experience. There is also a tendency to claim that human experience is a unique kind and, therefore, ontologically different than the natural or physical world. This dualism attributes subjectivity only to human minds, while everything else receives the status of objects.

It is an old, but valid, truism to claim that every person participates in and works out of the presuppositions of his/her era. Thus, one of the results of centuries of influence by dualistic descriptions is that the distinction between human experience and physical nature has played a role in the pre-understanding of many Biblical scholars. Consequently, the "nature" and "human" contrast pervades the way that many scholars have read and interpreted the Bible.² In the nineteenth century, one of the major responses of Biblical scholarship was the rise of historical method and historical criticism. During this era, Christian theologians and Biblical scholars chose to appropriate this approach rather than abandon "history" as an essential concern. This was the right move, but the focus on history brought with it dualistic

²This has been the consequence, in my opinion, of a onesided emphasis on the God-Man relationship in Biblical Theology.

assumptions which were accepted also by the cultural milieu.

In this century some persons have asked whether there might not be some more inclusive understanding that would overcome the bifurcation of the mental and the physical and of the historical and the natural. One of these persons was Alfred North Whitehead. Process theology utilizes Whitehead's cosmological worldview. Whitehead claims to be able to explain how the dualities noted in Plato, Descartes, Locke, and Kant can be found within each "occasion" of actuality.³ For Whitehead, each occasion of experiencing is both physical and mental. The "experiencing" receives the physical inheritance of the past actual world and originates a mental responding. In this explanation, nature is not merely physical, and human experience is not merely mental. Both nature and human experience have both mental and physical aspects.

Whitehead emphasizes the complete interrelatedness of all actuality. This means that there is no notion that an "actual occasion" of experiencing is self-sufficient, as were Descartes' substances. An actual occasion is an instance of the process of the many becoming one in a unique unity. In contrast to the more dualistic assumptions, for Whitehead, an occasion of nonhuman experience shares the same ontological status as human experience. Thus, Whitehead asserts that at the most primitive level of experience qua experience, there are general elements that are descriptive of both the "physical" world and human experience. This is an ontological leap that assigns an orientation

³Whitehead, p. 244.

of "subjectivity" even to the nonhuman entities of the world. Whitehead overcomes the bifurcation by describing degrees of complexity of experience.

This model provides historians with a different paradigm for investigation of the past. The past has an ontological objectivity apart from its being remembered or being verified by textual or other observable evidence. If the ontological status of subjectivity is taken seriously, it means that the historian's primary object is a past subject who is not "objective" and neutral in experiencing the world.⁴ It also means that to reconstruct only what an objective observer of visible events would have seen is not describing what actually happened.⁵ What actually happened at any moment in the past were the countless experiences of persons⁶ and of nonhuman entities. If II Isaiah is a unified literary composition, then it can be investigated and interpreted as the expression of a past subject whom we can call II Isaiah. In addition, it means that in II Isaiah when nonhuman entities are called upon to respond in some way, they have the ability to make some response because they are acts of experiencing (subjects). Granted, the metaphors used may sometimes be anthropocentric analogies, but this only emphasizes the way in which the Hebrews recognized and experienced the subjectivity of the nonhuman world.

⁴ John B. Cobb, Jr., "Ontology, History and Christian Faith," Religion and Life, XXXIV (1965), p. 274.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

B. MOVEMENTS AWAY FROM A DUALISTIC INTERPRETATION

BY OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLARS

We have suggested that a dualistic perspective has pervaded the cultural milieu of Western Europe for the past several centuries. We have also seen how the rise of the historical-critical method in the last century was adopted by Biblical scholars. Along with this method, they adopted the dualistic tendency to separate between human "mind" or "history" from "nature" or the physical world. This tendency was congruent with the best thinking of their day. But in the twentieth century some philosophers have become dissatisfied with dualisms. Concurrently, there have been some moves away from such a division by eminent Old Testament scholars. Perhaps the most noted critique of dualism in Old Testament scholarship came from Gerhard von Rad in a 1964 article entitled, "Some Aspects of the Old Testament World-View."⁷ In discussing the relationship of the Hebrews' tendencies to universalize their world-view and to particularize their understanding of history, von Rad makes the following comment:

We must, of course, bear in mind the fact that this statement of the problem is essentially one made from our own modern point of view, for the Old Testament draws no distinction between nature and history, regarding them as one single area of reality under the control of God.⁸

This statement stands in sharp contrast to one made earlier in his career in a 1936 article entitled, "The Theological Problem of the

⁷Gerhard von Rad, "Some Aspects of the Old Testament World-view," in his The Problem of the Hexateuch (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 144-65.

⁸Ibid., p. 155.

Old Testament Doctrine of Creation."⁹ In this he said:

The doctrine of redemption had first to be fully safeguarded, in order that the doctrine that nature, too, is a means of divine self-revelation might not encroach upon or distort the doctrine of redemption, but rather broaden and enrich it.¹⁰

These statements, drawn from the later and earlier periods of his reflection on the Old Testament, seem to indicate that a noticeable shift had occurred which allowed him to come to a different position.

In the later article, von Rad makes another startling change:

The greater part of what the Old Testament has to say about what we call Nature has simply never been considered. If I am right, we are nowadays in serious danger of looking at the theological problems of the Old Testament far too much from the one-sided standpoint of an historically conditioned theology.¹¹

These statements by von Rad constitute a radically new perspective in Old Testament studies. They indicate the possibility of an interpretation of the Old Testament which does not bifurcate between history and nature. Why is this so? Because the Old Testament does not make such divisions!

The truth of this claim about the Old Testament was recognized several years earlier by James Muilenburg in his commentary of II Isaiah. Here he says:

The sharp distinction between nature and history, so characteristic of the modern West, is hardly characteristic of the Biblical mind. Both nature and history are God's activity. Creation brings the world into existence and the world is always

⁹Gerhard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of The Old Testament Doctrine of Creation," in his The Problem of the Hexateuch, p. 131-43.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 143.

¹¹Rad, "Some Aspects of," p. 144.

under the active divine sovereignty; precisely the same thing can be said of history.¹²

In his comments on Isaiah 41:17-20, Muilenburg again notes the unity of nature and history in the Hebrew worldview. "To the ancient Hebrew, nature, like history, is the realm of eventfulness. It is the theater of God's activity."¹³ Both of these comments indicate that Muilenburg himself attempted to get inside the Hebrew mentality and, when he did, he found that no such sharp distinction obtained. In the first quotation from Muilenburg, he claims that both creation and history bring "...the world into existence...." This is an important step, for it implies that for these Hebrews, creation and history, or even nature and history, were actually a unity.¹⁴ Muilenburg understands that II Isaiah used the verb "to create" (בָּרָא) to describe both the universe and the people of Israel, both nature and history.¹⁵ This is an important identification.

Another excellent Biblical scholar, Claus Westermann, has come to this same conclusion regarding the whole of the Bible. At the end of his commentary on Isaiah 55 he says:

For the one who frees Israel is the lord of history...this one

¹²James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," in Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 402.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 460.

¹⁴Rad notes that for II Isaiah creation is the first of Yahweh's miraculous historical acts and a remarkable witness to his will to save. Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), II, 240.

¹⁵Muilenburg, p. 401-2.

is also the creator. And because of this the whole of creation, the universe, shares in the joy of those set free. Hence..."the trees shall clap their hands." This is exactly what we find in the psalms...the terms are exaggerated. Nonetheless, they are based on the belief that holds true for the whole of the Bible - in the mind of God, creation and history are a unity and can never be separated.¹⁶

Westermann is a form critical scholar who has carried out extensive analyses of the psalms and forms of prophetic speech.¹⁷ For all these scholars to agree that, from the vision of reality expressed in the Old Testament, history and creation (nature) are a unity, means that dualistic distinctions have been in the presuppositions of our own modern point of view. In the previous explanation of the general dualistic separations made in Western Europe since Descartes, I have attempted to account for the broad origins of these modern presuppositions.

Martin Buber, the Jewish Biblical theologian and sage, spoke in the late 1920s against the current understanding of history. He remarks:

What we are accustomed to call history is from the biblical standpoint only the facade of reality...The biblical point of view repudiates with ever increasing strength this two-dimensional reality, most strongly in the prophets...¹⁸

Buber made these comments in an article on "Biblical Leadership." Here, he wrestled with the problem of relating the biblical writing, which

¹⁶Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 292.

¹⁷Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 222, and Claus Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), p. 172.

¹⁸Martin Buber, "Biblical Leadership," in On The Bible (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 150.

springs from an "organic shaping memory,"¹⁹ to the modern sense of historicity. Although "history" was a central concern for Buber's biblical theology, his "historiography" was not what we call "history" in the modern sense. Buber says:

But neither can it be my task to delve beneath the biblical account to a picture more trustworthy historically, to historical data out of which I could piece together a historically useful picture. This too is impossible.

Buber agrees with Muilenburg and also with Westermann,²⁰ that in II Isaiah "God creates in history. There is no theological boundary in the eyes of this prophet between creation and history."²¹

It will be one of the objectives of this study to carry forward another step the movement which these men have begun. We will seek to interpret the Old Testament, especially Isaiah 40-44:23, without pre-suppositions which bifurcate creation or nature from history.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 138-9.

²⁰Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 24, and Westermann, The Praise of God, p. 127.

²¹Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 214.

Chapter 2

LOREN FISHER'S THESIS

A. AN EXPLANATION OF FISHER'S THESIS AND
COMPARISON WITH OTHER SCHOLARS

It is impossible to tell the history of early Israel in many ways.¹ However, a perspective that is most inclusive in accounting for what actually happened would be the best. When I speak of inclusiveness, I mean one that takes into its purview all of the ancient Near East and not only Israel. You have to begin with the "big picture" because, as Martin Noth says:

The vast world of the ancient Near East shared certain general presuppositions in conception and thought which for us today are no longer as self-evident as they were in that world.²

This means to me that scholars must not naively believe that early Israel was isolated from extensive connections with the whole of the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean world. Cyrus Gordon has been one to emphasize the international character of this world during the Amarna Age.³ We should note the words of Loren Fisher in this regard: "It seems rather naive to think that all contact with things

¹John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing (Chicago: Allenson, 1956), p. 128.

²Martin Noth, "God, King, People in the Old Testament," Journal for Theology and the Church, I (1965), 47.

³Cyrus H. Gordon, The Ancient Near East (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 86f.

Canaanite must be after Moses and west of the Jordan...."⁴ The notion that Israel was a primitive, desert, nomadic tribe has been prevalent for a long time and it cuts directly against an international perspective. The writings of Gordon have demonstrated that there was an international culture and that these Israelites were not "primitive" nomads. This fact has been demonstrated more recently by Norman Gottwald's extensive critique of nomadic societies. His conclusions about a pastoral social organization fundamentally alter "...the cultural and historical significance previously assigned to it..."⁵ Thus, we now have a picture dramatically different from what has been generally accepted since Julius Wellhausen.⁶

We must recall our international perspective so that our focal assumptions are not too narrow. If the exodus crossing did not produce a small nomadic tribe with a regional, desert mountain deity, what can we say about the theological perspective of these earliest Hebrews? What "general" presuppositions in conception and thought did they share with other cultures in their environment? One of the theological paradigms that was "in the air" of the whole Canaanite/West Semitic milieu

⁴Loren Fisher [Book Review of] "La Royaute de Yahwe dans la poesie et le culte de l'ancien Israel," by E. Lipinski, Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXV (1966), 498.

⁵Norman K. Gottwald, "Were the Israelites Pastoral Nomads," in Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (eds.) Rhetorical Criticism (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1974), p. 253.

⁶Norman K. Gottwald and Frank S. Frick, "The Social World of Ancient Israel," The Bible and Liberation (Berkeley: Radical Religion, 1976), p. 110-19.

was the story (or stories) of Baal. Based on the study of the Ugaritic story of Baal, Loren Fisher has proposed that a distinctive series of themes provides this narrative with a unity and dynamism.

The present essay will assume, as a provisional hypothesis, the series of themes discerned by Loren Fisher that were originally employed throughout Canaan to tell the story of Baal, the Creator-King of the cosmos. If we hypothesize with Fisher that the proper order of the texts is no. 68, no. 51, no. 67, then we will find the themes

"...conflict, kingship, order, temple building, (the temple is symbolic of the ordered cosmos and at the same time makes it possible to maintain order is also that which allows for the possible recurrence of chaos) and the banquet. This entire series may be called a creation of the Baal type."⁷

Fisher has proposed that this same structure was used with much different content to tell the story of Yahweh.⁸ This is Yahweh as the "man of war" who controls Yamm (the Sea) for his purposes, who leads his people to his mountain and there reigns as king. This "man of war" language was the Baal way of saying "Creator."⁹ Fisher says that:

"This creation of the Baal type (with modifications) was very usable not only when speaking of the cosmos but also for formulating the event of creating a people of God."¹⁰ (cf. Exodus 15:1-18). "It is only this kind of creator-king that would really be qualified to make a covenant of the Mosaic type with his

⁷Loren Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," Vetus Testamentum, XV (1965), 320, 316f. The Ugaritic texts will be cited according to Cyrus Gordon's numbering system.

⁸Loren Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," Encounter, XXVI (1965), 187f. Also see Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 321.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

people."¹¹ Thus, "...there was a unity in the tradition of the Exodus-Sinai event(s) as soon as it was formulated on the basis of creation of the Baal type."¹²

This thematic series would provide the framing criteria giving content to the encompassing perspective of Yahwism. This series must be always considered a dynamic unity of a whole story and, whenever a theme appears as central, its relationship to the whole context of other themes must be remembered.¹³

Do we have any evidence that the exodus peoples knew of such a paradigm? Yes, they visited Baal-zephon (Ex. 14:2) immediately before the exodus crossing. Whether Baal-zephon was a temple or a town,¹⁴ these exodus peoples could have been cognizant of the Baal mythology and the Baal-Yamm (Sea) struggle.¹⁵ In the Baal story from Ugarit, zpn is the name of Baal's holy mountain (51:IV:19 etc.). Given this possible milieu, we come back to these themes - conflict, kingship, order, temple building, and banquet. Now, the existential question for the Hebrew consciousness is, "What did this story of conflict with chaos and kingship mean to them?" Did they consider Baal a "creator" deity?

For the answer to this question we must consult the experts.

¹¹Ibid, p. 189.

¹²Ibid, p. 190.

¹³Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁴Frank E. Eakin, Jr., "The Reed Sea and Baalism," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVI (1967), 382-3.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 383.

There are many who consider the result of the conflict between Yamm and Baal to be only kingship and not creation.¹⁶ Norman Gottwald and John Gray speak of the conflict's results as "order prevailing over chaos."¹⁷ But for Gray, as for others, this kingship is not creation.¹⁸ This is because El is the Creator in the Ugaritic pantheon,¹⁹ not Baal. A similar sentiment has been expressed by Otto Eissfeldt: "...besides some traits of El which were taken over by Yahweh, the latter appropriated the function of Creator of the world and King of the Gods."²⁰ However, Eissfeldt says that Yahweh became both Creator and King. He says this transfer would have been gradual, but "...had already taken shape in the period before Israel became a state."²¹ Loren Fisher has also proposed that this transfer of Creator-King to Yahweh took place then. Yahweh was equated with El, but to tell the story of Yahweh, these early Hebrews used the theme sequence of Baal. However, if one does not recognize that the Baal story also has to do with creation, then

¹⁶Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 313-16. Marvin H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts (Leiden: Brill, 1955), p. 49. Arvid S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen: Gad, 1952), p. 138. Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 241.

¹⁷Norman K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 149. John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 71.

¹⁸Gray, p. 18, 20, 28, 29. John Gray, "The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development," Vetus Testamentum, VI (1956), 273.

¹⁹Gray, Legacy of Canaan, p. 58 n.4.

²⁰Otto Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," Journal of Semetic Studies, I (1956), 36.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 36-7.

images appropriated from Baal will be merely the result of merging traditions with no great import of meaning to the story of Yahweh.

Although for John Gray Baal is not a creator, the Hebrews borrowed many crucial/central traditions from him and applied them to Yahweh. Gray says that besides "selectively" borrowing and "practically" adopting the Canaanite fall New Year's festival of the seasonal conflict of Baal with Mot, the Hebrews assimilated "...the primeval conflict of Cosmos and Chaos, the triumph of God, his assumption of his kingship, and his judgment...."²² These "externals" and imagery the Hebrews borrowed from the ideology of the seasonal conflict between Baal and Mot. But, whereas the Canaanites had confined their religion to a seasonal, nature pattern, the Hebrews transformed these ideologies by their experience of Yahweh who acts in "...history and in the moral relationships with men...."²³

Gray has proposed that the kingship theme came from Baal. Eissfeldt suggested El. I would suggest both. Here we reach another crucial decision. Is the best way sociologically to account for Israel's stern rejection of the Baals of Israel to presume that Israel's growing realization after the exodus crossing was "God acts in historical events as opposed to a season natural pattern" or, "Yahweh, the universal Creator-King creates cosmos out of chaos - he rules the Sea - and we must attribute the powers of Baal, El and Asherah and others to

²²John Gray, "The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms," Vetus Testamentum, XI (1961), 27.

²³Ibid., p. 28.

him"? But asking the question in this way expresses unconscious pre-suppositions in our understanding of creation. In speaking of creation, do we mean absolute origins? What about the existential self-understanding of Israel? Were they speaking of absolute origins? These questions are difficult, and the answer depends on how one reads the texts. To answer in the first way one has to characterize the whole of Israel's neighbors as "nature religion." To propose the second answer is to characterize the sociological relations of Israel with Canaan in terms of a movement from polytheism to monotheism.

Support for the first response comes from Theodor Gaster who provides an outline of the seasonal pattern in the Canaanite, Hittite, and Egyptian festival calendars.²⁴ The distinction between nature and history has also been set in the context of the history of religions by Mircea Eliade.²⁵ Eliade proposes that Israel's uniqueness lies in this very realization of an historical, "one-way time."²⁶ The cyclical repetition of mythical time has been overcome by the Hebrews who realize that "...historical events have value in themselves insofar as they are determined by the will of God."²⁷ The surrounding nations of the ancient Near East fled from "history" to find meaning in the cyclical

²⁴Theodor H. Gaster, Thespis (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 513.

²⁵Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 176.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁷*Ibid.*

regeneration of nature expressed in myth. Eliade's contrast is an either/or between "cyclical" and "historic."

Stan Rummel and I have argued that this antithetical contrast produces a dualistic dichotomy between nature and history - no continuity between the two spheres.²⁸ Rummel charges,

This assumption that the subhuman is merely cyclic forms the historiographically significant issue. Historical evidence alone cannot support this assumption.²⁹

I feel that this dualistic contrast produces a dichotomy between redeemable human beings and unredeemable, cyclical nature. But if God's acts have not always been for the redemption of the non-human as well as the human, then redeemable human beings spring forth from the unredeemable natural world. This is the kind of separation which the Hebrews did not make.³⁰

Now we will consider the second response the Hebrews could have made. The movement from polytheism to monotheism does not involve postulating a radical separation of Israel from its environment. It involves transferring the functions of the many gods into one with some

²⁸Stan Rummel, "Human and Subhuman: The History of Israel as Ecology" (unpublished paper, December 1975), p. 2-13. Besides calling for an ecological paradigm for the history of Israel rather than the current political paradigm, Stan Rummel has described the drastic effects that the current paradigm has had for our vision of the non-human world. On the one hand, the non-human has simply been excluded as background or a "stage" in the telling of Israel's history. On the other hand, a radical dichotomy is assumed between nature and history. But, actually, these two descriptions of the effects of the current paradigm cannot be so easily separated.

²⁹Ibid., p. 6,10.

³⁰Kevin C. Clark, "The Theology of II Isaiah: Historical Redemption or Creation-Redemption?" (unpublished paper given at the spring meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Los Angeles, 1976.)

definite focus. The focus here proposed is the series of Baal themes which were adapted to tell the story of the Creator-King Yahweh. In acknowledging a creation of cosmos from chaos model, we realize that the Baal story is not speaking of absolute origins. Similarly, in our reading, early Hebrew texts dealing with creation were not speaking of absolute origins either.³¹ Fisher says:

Those who say "no creation at Ugarit" must have a very narrow definition of creation. It may mean that they are looking for a creatio ex nihilo. Certainly they do not consider "re-creation" or the ordering of chaos as creation.³²

The problem is that Baal is not seen as a worldly creator. However, many scholars do not perceive that the building of Baal's house is the ordering of the earth.³³ Fisher says:

Hence the new king has a temple which is a microcosm and the ordering of this temple resembles the creation of the cosmos.³⁴

Baal allows a window to be placed in his temple which is a rift in the clouds. This temple is symbolic for the cosmos and the window allows for him to send forth the rains and to maintain order.³⁵ In addition, text 51:IV:69 tells us that "Baal sets the seasons." This is no creatio ex nihilo, but it is creation of the world. And here there is continuity between nature and history; they are not contrasted as opposites. In fact, if an exegete does not contrast myth and history in

³¹Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 321.

³²Ibid., p. 315.

³³Ibid., p. 316-20.

³⁴Ibid., p. 319.

³⁵Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 185-6.

this way, there is no problem as to whether the Hebrews mythologize history or historicize mythology.³⁶ The "fusion" is the movement from polytheism to monotheism.

Our final expert, Dennis McCarthy, has explicitly rejected Fisher's proposal on the grounds that Ugaritologists limit the definition of creation to something like the Babylonian enuma elish and "...there is no hint that the winner constructs a new order as Marduk does...."³⁷ In contrast to the creation of the world that we have just described, McCarthy claims that this chaos motif does not really tell of "...the formation of an ordered world consequent on victory over that enemy."³⁸ Now Fisher has acknowledged that, "At Ugarit we have no description of the process of ordering the cosmos, but nevertheless we have it."³⁹ What he means is that Yamm is not cut into pieces⁴⁰ and distributed spatially and visually by Baal, but that does not mean "no creation" unless the definition is limited as McCarthy and others limit it.

In McCarthy's case the limitation of the meaning of "creation" is not based on the assumption of creatio ex nihilo. In fact, he is concerned that we may introduce such "foreign" elements into our

³⁶Ibid., p. 1-10. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 322.

³⁷Dennis J. McCarthy, "Creation Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXIX (1967), 393-406.

³⁸Ibid., p. 89.

³⁹Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 320.

⁴⁰Ugaritic text 68.

understanding of the texts.⁴¹ For him, the "so-called creation motifs" in all their various images are introduced to illustrate that "Yahweh is absolute king of all" - "overwhelming" and "total power." These motifs confirm that "...God controls events among men...."⁴² Here we are back to the first response wherein the distinctiveness of Israel rests in historical events and Israel adapted these motifs only as external images to point to their absolute King. This may lead to the dualistic perspective described above.

According to McCarthy, this mixing of motifs, such as warrior, mountain, storm god motifs, with the chaos imagery, represents a breakdown of a form. I would assert that it represents the movement from polytheism to monotheism. In Canaanite religion the cosmos is divided between Baal, Mot, and Yamm. Yahweh's cosmos is not so divisible.⁴³ My feeling is that our modern division of the world into nature and history is incongruent with the early Israelite refusal to divide the world into separate areas of control, i.e. Yamm and Mot. If so, then the second answer, that of Loren Fisher, is vindicated. The history of early Israel is a movement from a polytheism to monotheism.⁴⁴

⁴¹McCarthy, p. 88.

⁴²Ibid., p. 99.

⁴³Loren Fisher, "The Temple Quarter," Journal of Semetic Studies, VIII (1963), 34-41.

⁴⁴Also see James Barr, "Story and History in Biblical Theology," Journal of Religion, LVI (1976), 1-17.

B. AN ADAPTATION OF FISHER'S THESIS

We are now ready to expand Fisher's thesis. The Baal story does not deal with absolute origins. That's why the Hebrews picked it. El or Marduk involved too many problems - theogony and polytheism.⁴⁵ When the Hebrews adapted it, the Sea conflict no longer was central in telling the story. That victory is assumed. Yahweh is the universal Creator-King who rules the Sea.⁴⁶ But what does this mean? Does it mean he has absolute and total power? Overwhelming, yes. Absolute, no. The King who rules the Sea creates the order which makes life possible.⁴⁷ The Sea (Yamm) is now his instrument for the creation of life and order. He governs it. To understand exactly what I mean one must imagine the earth's water cycle. Now, I am not saying that these Hebrews made a Copernican leap. I am saying that it is possible to observe that the one who rules the Sea also rules the water cycle - the clouds (Ps. 68:4), the rain, the snow, the springs, the rivers, and the dew. Clouds don't come from the desert. Droughts are a function of the water cycle too. Water is that which interrelates the sea, the heavens, and the earth, and creates and sustains life. Although one can attribute absolute power to this God, considering the Baal story from which the model is drawn, that is not necessary.

Hebrew cosmology is essential to the actual experience of Hebrew monotheism and not an unimportant embarrassing remnant. To be

⁴⁵Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 321.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 321-5.

⁴⁷Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 191.

sure, Israel carried on a radical demythologizing process toward "every claim of the this-worldly realm to participate in 'God's' holiness."⁴⁸ But a definite cosmological model provided the framework through which the Hebrew's actual experience was expressed.

I cannot here focus on the dynamics of the Baal cosmogony that was adapted by the early Hebrews. But I can point again to the series of Baal themes which delineate the structure of the narrative - conflict, kingship, order, temple building, and banquet.⁴⁹ We have already attempted to describe what this structure implies about the meaning of the narrative, especially as it was adapted by the Hebrews. Fisher has described this adaptation by the early Hebrews as a "creation-redemption" paradigm.⁵⁰ He says, "Creation in this sense is redemption."⁵¹

Using the Baal paradigm, we can see how the Hebrews' world-view was holistic - they did not dichotomize between nature and history. Their cosmological language, including Yahweh as Man of War and the Kingship of Yahweh, was the result of this movement from polytheism to monotheism.

At the time Fisher wrote the articles treated above, and until

⁴⁸John B. Cobb, Jr., "Christianity and Myth," Journal of Bible and Religion, XXXIII (1965), 316.

⁴⁹Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 186. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 320.

⁵⁰Fisher, "Chaos to Cosmos," p. 195.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 191.

as late as 1974,⁵² he would have identified creation and redemption.⁵³ I believe he would have seen Mot as another form of chaos, like Yamm.⁵⁴ Therefore, when the Hebrews unified the "extremes" of the earth and the sea under the control of Yahweh, they unified creation and redemption.

Fisher's thesis has been adopted as part of the main basis of this study, but his former understanding of creation-redemption will be modified slightly. We will not claim that there is no distinction between creation and redemption. They are not synonymous or identical. But the perspective that this study will propose for the interpretation of Yahweh, the Creator-King, is that of creation↔redemption. This means that creation and redemption are mutually implicative or mutually reciprocal. It means that where creation is there is also the possibility of redemption. This modification results from a different interpretation of the relationship between Yamm and Mot. If text 68 means that Yamm is actually killed and done away with, then Mot is not just another form of Yamm (chaos) but is actually distinct from him. However, creation and redemption are "equal" in the sense that, although not identified, they are both mutually implied in the Creator-King's power. When the Creator-King creates, he redeems as well. In this way all creation is a form of redemption and all redemption is a form of creation (or re-creation). They have common elements and are not either mutually exclusive or identical. Fisher has himself moved

⁵²Loren R. Fisher, "Mankind in Creation," Mid-Stream, XIII:1-2 (Fall-Winter 1973-74)

⁵³Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 191.

⁵⁴Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 320 n. 2.

to a non-identical interpretation of Mot and Yamm and, consequently, of redemption and creation. However, the formulation of "creation↔redemption" and its explanation and application are part of the undertaking of this study.

Another way to speak of this kind of power is to call it "relational power." Fisher has indicated that this Creator-King paradigm is a "relational type of thinking."⁵⁵ Thus, the nature and role of relationships determine what is defined as "power." Recently, Bernard Loomer⁵⁶ has contrasted this notion of power with an alternative notion of power which he calls "unilateral." Loomer defines relational power as "...the ability both to produce and to undergo an effect."⁵⁷ Unilateral power is "one-directional" as "...the capacity to influence another in contrast to being influenced."⁵⁸ Unilateral power is a non-relational concept. But relational power involves the feeling that "...the capacity to receive from another or to be influenced by another is truly indicative of power."⁵⁹ Thus, "power" is the capacity to sustain a mutually internal relationship.⁶⁰ Its aim "...is the enlargement of all the members to both give and receive."⁶¹ Thus, relational

⁵⁵Fisher, "Mankind in Creation," p. 45.

⁵⁶Bernard Loomer, "Two Conceptions of Power," Process Studies, VI (1976), 5-32.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 22.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 27.

power considered as "size" exemplifies "...relationships whose range exhibits the greatest compatible contrasts, contrasts which border on chaos, (Whitehead)." ⁶²

This relational conception is characteristic of process modes of viewing power. Process theology assumes this mutual-relation notion of power in that God and the world are mutually interrelated. God affects the world and the world affects God. Although God influences every act of experiencing, God does not alone determine the outcome. ⁶³ An act of experiencing actually exists only for a moment and then it perishes. This act of experiencing involves the coming together of all actuality and possibility, but not all of each is integrated into every occasion of experiencing. John Cobb says that God is the actual entity who "...brings the realm of possibility into effective and limiting relation to the becoming occasions of the world." ⁶⁴ In presenting to every becoming occasion a gradation of relevant possibilities, called the "initial aim," God is the principle of concretion or limitation for all occasions. ⁶⁵ In this model of God's power, God functions as one who determines the widest possible limits for each act of experiencing.

But this initial aim also points the occasion toward an ideal

⁶²Ibid., p. 30.

⁶³Charles Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problems of Evil," Current Philosophical Issues (Springfield: Thomas, 1966), pp. 201-212.

⁶⁴John B. Cobb, Jr., A Christian Natural Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 173.

⁶⁵Ibid., 150-1, 173.

possibility which is the ideal aim for that occasion given that occasion's particular past. This possibility is among those given in the gradation of relevant possibilities. The possibilities inherited by an act of experiencing from its past actual world may be in conflict or in sharp contradiction. But the initial aim contains an ideal possibility which could synthesize and harmonize these conflicting possibilities. In this way, God provides the occasion with the relevant novel possibilities which were not given by that occasion's past actual world. However, the occasion is not forced to actualize this possibility. The initial aim is the first phase of the occasion's own "subjective aim." During "later" phases of the occasion, the occasion may modify or reject the ideal aim. The occasion's own subjective aim is its exercise of self-determination within the widest limits set for it by the initial aim of God.

From a process perspective, this introduction of novel possibilities is the way in which one could speak of God's providing for the possibility of "redemption." It is a description of the manner in which new possibilities emerge into experiencing and are actualized. The introduction of novelty by the initial aim of God frees occasions from the domination of and "bondage" to the past. It provides alternative possibilities to repetition, boredom and decay. Such origination of novelty is the defining characteristic of "life." Living occasions must originate novelty to respond to the novelty of their environment.

But the initial aim also creates the act of experiencing. God's initial aim for every occasion is the initial phase of the subjective aim which "calls" the occasion into the act of experiencing.

It also determines the region that the occasion will "occupy" in the world. Consequently, process theology describes the way in which God is an active agent continually influencing every act of experiencing in the world. God does not act in two separate ways by first creating and then redeeming. The initial aim of God both creates and provides for the possibility of redemption. God's "power" is relational in that God feels and accepts the actual outcome of the occasion's subjective aim and provides the new occasion with an aim which also creates the occasion and provides it with the possibility of redemption. God affects the world and the world affects God. God's power can also be described as creating↔redeeming power because both creation and the possibility of redemption are mutually implied or interrelated in every act of God.

This description of the creation↔redemption model of God and individual occasions may seem far removed from the Creator-King model. The Hebrews spoke of order out of chaos and freedom from bondage (slavery) because of their actual experience at the Reed Sea. This creation↔redemption was on the "cosmic" level and sociological level of "a people." However, their corporate, sociological experience of being created and redeemed must have been derived from individual, personal experience.

The process description can be enlarged to speak of the much larger and more complex human sociological setting. Human societies may become stagnant and repetitive. They may adhere to strict modes of expression and response. They, thus, become repressive and tend to thwart novelty and creative expression. Human social organization may

not only discourage creative expression but may also stifle it by direct physical repression and control. Such a society drastically limits the variety of expression and contrast. The result is repetition of set modes of behavior and it results in boredom and decay. This would be especially true for the smaller society of those physically repressed, such as slaves. It is from this kind of situation that the Hebrews escaped. That escape required the origination of tremendous novelty at the level of human experience. It required the cooperation and communication of many individuals. Most of all it required the desire to be free and the hope for a better future. Therefore, this escape was a creative expression in which the activity of God as the organ of novelty must have played a great role. The process description of how God both creates and introduces novel possibilities into experiencing can be applied at this level of human experience. It was from this kind of personal experience that the Hebrews claimed that on the sociological level "a people" had been created and redeemed from bondage. On the cosmic level, it was Yahweh, as the Creator-King, who was responsible for this sociological creation and redemption.

Thus, the process description of God's creation↔redemption power is congruent with the creation↔redemption model of the Creator-King described by Fisher's hypothesis. In both descriptions God is the controller of the limits or "extremes." In Whitehead, this control is the determination of a gradation of relevant possibilities for every act of experiencing. But the Creator-King rules the Sea. This means Yahweh controls the water cycle and, therefore, the extremes between the forms of water - the Sea, rain, dew, rivers - and the forms of

water's absence - drought, desert, wilderness. Yahweh's power is relational power between himself and the creatures of his world. It makes for the possibility of life⁶⁶ and for social order.

From the perspective of process philosophy, God is not all-powerful, but God's efficacy in providing initial aims is a creation↔redemption relationship toward all. The Creator-King model can be understood as though Yahweh controls the extremes absolutely. In this view, Yahweh is the Allpowerful Creator-King who not only controls the limits but who determines completely whatever comes to pass. However, considering the Baal story from which the early Hebrews adapted their cosmological overview, Yahweh need not be allpowerful. Whether Yahweh is or is not Allpowerful, there is a tradition of speaking of this power as creation↔redemption. This mutual interrelatedness between creation and redemption will be found in one of the earliest records of Israel's history - Exodus 15:1-18.

C. AN APPLICATION OF FISHER'S THESIS TO EXODUS 15:1-18

Frank Cross and Noel Freedman have argued cogently for the archaic character of Ex. 15:1-18.⁶⁷ I do not have time to discuss the

⁶⁶Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 191.

⁶⁷Frank M. Cross and David Noel Freedman, "The Song of Mariam," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XIV (1955), 237-250. David Noel Freedman, "Early Israelite History in the Light of Early Israelite Poetry," in Hans Roberts Goldrichte (ed.) Unity and Diversity (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1975). David Noel Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXXII (1960), 101-107. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 376.

growing flood of literature that has proposed meter and strophe structure or traditio-historical analysis for these verses.⁶⁸ I will follow the rhetorical critical analysis of spoken diction patterns and parallelism by James Muilenburg.⁶⁹ But, first, Loren Fisher has claimed that, "In Ex. 15:1-18 there is a very old psalm which...contains the formal elements of creation of the Baal type."⁷⁰ He notes that "Yahweh is a 'Man of War'" is a theme drawn from Baal (cf. Anat. III:11) and he claims that this was the Hebrew's way of speaking of the "...Creator-King who orders all things."⁷¹ In verses eight, ten, and twelve, Yahweh controls two of the cosmological limits - the Sea⁷² and, in verse twelve, "...even the earth."⁷³ In verse seventeen he leads his people to his "abode" and there is proclaimed "King" in verse eighteen.⁷⁴

⁶⁸P. C. Craigie, "The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry," Tyn-dale Bulletin, XX (1969), 76-94. David Noel Freedman, "Strophe and Meter in Exodus 15," in A Light Unto my Path (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 163-203. George W. Coats, "The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif," Vetus Testamentum, XVII (1967), 253-265. Lewis S. Hay, "What Really Happened at The Sea of Reeds?" Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXIII (1964), 397-403. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth," Journal for Theology and Church, V (1968), 1-25. George W. Coats, "The Song of the Sea," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXXI (1969), 1-17. Brevard S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," Vetus Testamentum, XX (1970), 406-418. Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 122-44. Cross and Freedman, "The Song of Mariam," p. 237-250.

⁶⁹James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," in Studia Biblica et Semitica: Theodoro Christiano Uriezen...dedicata. (Wageningen: Veenman, 1966), pp. 233-251.

⁷⁰Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 188. Eakin, "The Reed Sea and Baalism," p. 378-384.

⁷¹Loren R. Fisher, "A New Ritual Calendar from Ugarit," Harvard Theological Review, LXIII (1970), 485-501.

⁷²Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 131.

⁷³Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," p. 188.

⁷⁴Ibid.

From Fisher's creation-redemption position, he says that "...there is a natural fluidity of thought" in which there is "...the subject of creation with redemptive overtones."⁷⁵

In addition to Fisher's proposals, I should like to propose another Baal theme, "thy right hand" (Ex. 15:6,12a, cf. also 16c). This, I believe, is a deliberate contrast to Baal. Baal seems to use his right hand to do some important things. After Kothar has arrived to build Baal's house/temple, Baal seats him on his right hand to feast (51:I:109). When enemies invade his kingdom and his mountain, Baal goes out to meet them with a cedar (?) in his right hand (51:VII:41), but it is quickly wrested from him. When El surrenders Baal to Yamm, Baal rebels and takes a dagger in his right hand (137:39) but is soon subdued. These situations seem to show that his right hand acts in important events, none of them especially victorious. But Yahweh's right hand is powerful and "shatters" the enemy. Also, Ex. 15:6 is composed in a parallelism that is very Canaanite.⁷⁶ The festal shout of Kingship in verse eighteen is similar to that of Baal in 51:IV:44 and the exact word ʿlm is used to describe Baal's kingdom in text 68:10.

Muilenburg's structure analysis suggests that the psalm is structured into three major sections (v.1b-6, v.7-11, v.12-16) followed by a hymnic celebration of the occupation of the land and enthronement (v.17), and a closing acclamation (v.18).⁷⁷ Each of the

⁷⁵Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," p. 323.

⁷⁶Cross and Freedman, "Song of Mariam," p. 237-50.

⁷⁷Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs," p. 233-51.

three major sections contains a hymnic confession (v.2-3, v.7-8, v.12-14), an epic narrative (v.4-5, v9-10, v.15-16b), and a hymnic response (v.6, v.11, v.16cd). In the hymnic confession sections, the subject extolled is Yahweh. In the epic narrative, the subject is the enemy with an emphasis on the motif of the Sea. The hymnic responses do not emphasize conflict with the Sea, but with the pursuing army, and Frank Cross says the Sea is a "weapon" or "...passive instrument in Yahweh's control."⁷⁸

Muilenburg's analysis of the unity of the psalm, especially vs. 12-18, supports the conclusion that this section was not a later addition.⁷⁹ The evidence he marshalls is that of corresponding use of the same style and language as in the first two sections. Here again the motif of the right hand appears.⁸⁰ Now some problems remain. Where is the "abode" to which Yahweh leads them? On this question, tradition-historical analysts divide. Some say it is in Canaan⁸¹ and others in the southern wilderness.⁸² Where it was used is debatable since that "abode" is not specified and it could have gone through a history of transmission. But there is no reason to deny that the "abode" may be Sinai. In fact, in a most recent study by Noel Freedman,

⁷⁸Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 131.

⁷⁹Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs," p. 245.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 246.

⁸¹Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 126,146. Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs," p. 249. Coats, "Song of the Sea," p. 17.

⁸²Freedman, "Early Israelite History," p. 11,20. Coats, "Song of the Sea," p. 1-17.

he proposes that this "abode" is none other than the mountain at Sinai (cf. vs.13,17) which these early Israelites reached after their march through the wilderness.⁸³ Now the question as to where this psalm was used divides scholars again. Was it used in the fall festival at Shechem⁸⁴ or in the spring festival at Gilgal?⁸⁵ Fisher thinks that the psalm may have found a setting when Yahweh was enthroned in the spring, perhaps at the Passover.⁸⁶ Wherever it was used, there is evidence that the Baal paradigm gave it thematic unity.

Looking again at this third section (v.12-16), we might detect the international perspective discussed earlier. If one does not presuppose that the psalm could not have received Canaanite style until the tradition reached Canaan, then these Hebrews were quite well aware of where they were and that the news of Yahweh's victory had travelled. They were no isolated nomads.

The third section also includes two important actions of Yahweh that are results of the same exodus crossing. The people were redeemed (v.13b) and created (v.16d).⁸⁷ This is another (theological) change in the Baal paradigm. This is the mutual interrelatedness of creation and redemption in the same event. Baal first created the cosmos by

⁸³Freedman, "Early Israelite History," p. 5-6.

⁸⁴Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs," p. 236. Coats, "Song of the Sea," p. 10.

⁸⁵Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 123. Fisher, "A New Ritual Calendar," p. 496.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 496.

⁸⁷Cross, Canaanite Myth, p. 130, 141.

defeating Yamm and then struggles with Mot to "redeem" the world from his influence. But in Exodus 15:1-18, it is Yahweh who both creates and redeems in the same action.⁸⁸ What does he create and redeem? A people. It is an emphasis on the social order.⁸⁹ The Creator-King who rules the Sea and orders life is a social orderer who creates and redeems with the same right hand. This mutual interrelatedness of creation and redemption is the same kind of description proposed in the previous section that characterizes the activity of the Creator-King.

Considering the question, "What actually happened?" I would say that what we have here is not a description of visible events. It is rather a testimony of the actual experience of "the people" which included subjective experiences of Yahweh, who controls the Sea and created a people from a situation of chaos and redeemed a people from bondage.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 108.

⁸⁹cf. McCarthy, p. 405-6.

Chapter 3

THE RELATIONSHIP OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION

IN THE INTERPRETATION OF II ISAIAH

A. THE CREATION/REDEMPTION CONTRAST IN THE
INTERPRETATION OF II ISAIAH

In the Introduction, we dealt with the separation of nature and history in the dominant cultural milieu since Descartes. We also suggested that major Old Testament scholars feel that this separation does not obtain in the Old Testament itself. But if nature and history should not be bifurcated in textual exegesis, then the question arises as to whether or how much "creation" and "redemption" should be separated when describing the Hebrews' understanding of creation and redemption. What initial image or images sprang into their consciousness when they thought of "creation" and "redemption"? Were creation and redemption temporally separate in their understanding? These same questions may be directed toward us.

Since early in the Patristic age of church history, there has been a predominant tendency to speak of creation as an absolute origin that was "in the beginning." Thus, for many people even today, creation has come to mean that original event at the beginning of the linear line of historical time. That is, it has become common to initially think of "creation" as being an original event which occurred back at the beginning of time. Although one can point to the fact that God still creates the world by sustaining it in his Providence, the primary

emphasis in "creation" is the originative event. This is our Christian heritage. But, as we have attempted to show, the Baal cosmogony, from which the early Hebrews adapted a series of themes, was not speaking of absolute origins. It described a Creator-King who brought order out of chaos.

Although Biblical exegetes may deny that the Hebrews separated nature and history, the question as to whether they considered creation and redemption to be temporally separate is another issue. Our explanation of the model of the Creator-King has proposed that Yahweh's power was creation↔redemption, relational power. This suggests that creation and redemption were not temporally separate in their understanding. For them God who is creating is, also, in the same act, redeeming. This means that the emphasis heard in the word "creation" falls on the "present" moment rather than on an original event. Of course, events in the past involved God's creating↔redeeming, but the emphasis on an absolute beginning does not obtain. Now, as we consider the theology of II Isaiah, the Creator-King model provides a subtle shift of emphases from the interpretations given by Muilenburg, Westermann, and StuhlmueLLer.

James Muilenburg goes a long way toward unifying the relation of creation and redemption in his interpretation of II Isaiah. Muilenburg perceives that creation, redemption, and history are the major areas which occupy the prophet's attention.¹ Muilenburg says:

Redemption is the central act which God performs at his

¹James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," in Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 387-399.

appearing, but this redemption...is viewed from the vantage point of God's act in creation, for the end is related to the beginning. History is understood...in the light of the two primary focuses of redemption and creation.²

In this way Muilenburg claims that these three major areas are always interrelated in the prophet's thought. Because of II Isaiah's "theology of world-history"³ when he speaks of God's redemptive advent, he remembers God's creation in the beginning. II Isaiah does not speak of either one without it being related to the other. Thus, creation and redemption are bound up together in the prophet's more inclusive sense of history. They are necessarily related.

Remembering the previous quote, it often sounds as if Muilenburg temporally separates creation and redemption. Muilenburg's description of Yahweh as "The Creator" begins with these statements.

The purpose of God's coming into history is to effect redemption...This is primary in Second Isaiah's thought. But closely related to it is God's activity in creation. The God who redeems is the creator.⁴

The final words of this section on "The Creator" seem to indicate this temporal separation.

Yahweh's purpose is the salvation and redemption of his people; creation is the initial act of which redemption is the finale.⁵

However, we must evaluate these statements in the light of Muilenburg's claim that II Isaiah uses the verb *בָּרָא* in relation to history.⁶ In the

²Ibid., p. 399.

³Ibid., p. 398. cf. Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 208.

⁴Ibid., p. 401

⁵Ibid., p. 402.

⁶Ibid.

quote before last, Muilenburg speaks of "...God's activity in creation." We must remember that for Muilenburg all of the past is considered God's creating. This creating has never ceased, whether Yahweh was redeeming or making covenant or electing or in his eschatological activity. Thus, he even says that within II Isaiah's eschatology and strong cosmic interest, "...creation is his revelation."⁷ But Muilenburg can still speak of "creation" as having a temporal beginning. The first quote of Muilenburg's indicates that "...God's act in creation..." was in the "beginning." Also, Muilenburg can say, "Creation brings the world into existence...."⁸ Thus, although God's creating activity has never ceased throughout history, there is a temporal beginning which he can sometimes refer to as "creation." He can even contrast creation in the beginning with the redemption at Yahweh's appearing as he does in the first quote. But creation is not only something that happened in the beginning; it also continues (בְּרָא) throughout history. Therefore, although the two can be described as separate kinds of activity, Yahweh is creating when he redeems in history.

Claus Westermann has also suggested that creation and history are a unity in the Bible. He says that II Isaiah has fused together three areas of divine activity - creation, control of world history, and deliverance. II Isaiah can do this, "Because as creator he was the lord of history and as both, the deliverer of his people."⁹ The most important tradition that II Isaiah uses to proclaim the new exodus is

⁷Ibid., p. 401.

⁸Ibid., p. 402 n.59.

⁹Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 17.

the heart of "the old historical credo (von Rad)," the Exodus from Egypt¹⁰

Westermann, in a way different from Muilenburg, discerns that II Isaiah closely connects God's work in creation and in redemption.¹¹ II Isaiah accomplishes this through his incorporation of the language of the psalms of descriptive praise.¹² Using this language of the Psalter, II Isaiah develops a "polarity" in his glorification of Yahweh as creator and as lord of history.¹³ Therefore, for II Isaiah, "...the creator is the lord of history (44:25f)."¹⁴ Yahweh is Israel's creator and her redeemer.¹⁵ Westermann says of this "polarity:"

...Israel's redeemer is the God of majesty who created the world and who directs the entire course of its history (emphasis mine.).¹⁶

Although II Isaiah closely connects creation and redemption in this way, Westermann says that:

...this must never be taken as meaning that, in whole or in part, the two merge, for that would be a misconception of what the prophet had in mind.¹⁷

Therefore, Westermann understands that God as Creator refers primarily to a God "who created the world," even though creation and history are a unity. "Creation" occurred back at the beginning of history. A thorough reading of his later book, Creation, confirms this understanding.¹⁸

¹⁰Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹Ibid., p. 25.

¹²Ibid., p. 24-7.

¹³Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Claus Westermann, Creation (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1974), p. 1-123. cf. especially p. 114f.

However, Westermann recognizes that the creative activity of Yahweh extends into the present. Although this is not redemptive activity as well, he recognizes the control of the waters (extremes) language, that we have pointed to as examples of the power of the Creator-King, as being power "...in the realm of creation."¹⁹

At the very end of his book, Creation, Westermann points to a tradition of this firm polarity between creation and redemption which extends through both the Old and New Testaments. He says:

They cannot be constrained under the one notion (Creation) but neither can they be separated from each other.²⁰

Therefore, Westermann shows how II Isaiah brought together into a "polarity" the notions of Yahweh as Creator and as Redeemer. However, II Isaiah utilizes this polarity to emphasize that the God who now redeems them is the same lord of history who created the vast universe.²¹ Thus, Westermann would understand that the initial emphasis between Creation and redemption does not fall on the present moment, but are temporally separate in II Isaiah's vision of the new exodus. He binds together two separate traditions and they do not in any way merge.

Carroll StuhlmueLLer agrees with von Rad that the creation themes in II Isaiah must be investigated as a subordinate role in the context of redemption.²² However, StuhlmueLLer feels that II Isaiah does not

¹⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 25.

²⁰Westermann, Creation, p. 123.

²¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 25.

²²Carroll StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), p. 5.

argue from a presupposition about creation in order to elicit faith in redemption, as von Rad does.²³ StuhlmueLLer says:

If the prophet introduces the idea of creation, he is seeking to communicate adequately the full rich meaning of Yahweh's new redemptive work for Israel.²⁴

Like Muilenburg and Westermann, StuhlmueLLer emphasizes the close connection between creation and redemption in II Isaiah. He says:

The prophet so integrally relates the two doctrines with one another that to disentangle them is to destroy what he means by either one....Dt-Is thoroughly intertwines²⁵ the idea of creation with the dominant motif of redemption....

However, unlike Muilenburg and Westermann, StuhlmueLLer proposes to discern in II Isaiah "...a biblical theology of creative redemption."²⁶ He gives a descriptive definition of "creation" in II Isaiah: "...an exceptionally wondrous redemptive act of Yahweh...with 'creative' repercussions upon all the elements of Israel's existence, even upon the cosmos."²⁷ In this way StuhlmueLLer sees that II Isaiah predominantly emphasizes the creative effects of the present redemptive activity of Yahweh.

After StuhlmueLLer examines the themes of "the way" (derek), "the processional" highway, and "the struggle motif," he concludes that II Isaiah's originality lies in:

"...a new perspective of Yahweh's redemptive action, now seen to reach out with creative effectiveness, wondrously renewing every area of Israelite existence."²⁸

²³Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 6-7.

²⁷Ibid., p. 9.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 8.

²⁸Ibid., p. 94.

Similarly, in II Isaiah's analogical employment of the go'el creative redeemer concept,

"The principal interest of Dt-Is, therefore, lay not in the first creation of Israel long ago but in the new recreation of the people."²⁹

But what about "the first creation"? How does StuhlmueLLer see that it fits into this theology of creative redemption? II Isaiah spoke rarely of "the first" creation. Since StuhlmueLLer's procedure is to investigate creative redemption with II Isaiah's main redemptive themes,³⁰ he recognizes that II Isaiah "...is not basing his argument or judgment upon Yahweh's creating the universe."³¹ Here, I think, he means "first creation." In fact, the poems which contain "first" creation themes may have been prompted by II Isaiah's Babylonian situation.³² Therefore, considering the infrequency of such references and the principal theme of a new creative redemption, StuhlmueLLer concludes that "first" creation "...enters these poems only incidentally...."³³ In Isa. 40:12-31 the theme of "first" creation appears (cf. v.26). "Yet, Dt-Is hurried on to speak of what was more important to him, Yahweh's lordship, a continual form of re-creation" (emphasis mine).³⁴

Thus, StuhlmueLLer, more directly than Muilenburg and Westermann, points to the unity of or "polarity" between creation and redemption as something which occurs in the present activity of Yahweh. Although he sees this as still subordinate to the theme of redemption,

²⁹Ibid., p. 123.

³⁰Ibid., p. 8-9.

³¹Ibid., p. 161.

³²Ibid., p. 143.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 161-2.

StuhlmueLLer has discerned the emphasis of creation and redemption in the present activity of Yahweh. Thus, StuhlmueLLer's theology of creative redemption has also claimed that creation and redemption are not temporally separate in the dominant emphasis of II Isaiah.

The concern of the first part of this chapter has been to describe the relationship between creation and redemption in II Isaiah as that relationship has been understood by Muilenburg, Westermann and StuhlmueLLer. Both Muilenburg and Westermann would emphasize the close connection or polarity that II Isaiah establishes between these two activities or traditions. However, StuhlmueLLer proposes that the relationship between creation and redemption can be described as creative redemption and as occurring in the present activity of Yahweh.

The subtle shift that the Creator-King paradigm proposes is the claim that, rather than creative redemption being the emphasis, Yahweh's activity can be more adequately expresses as a creating↔redeeming relationship. This relationship means that Yahweh's creating power and redeeming power are not two separate activities. Although, because of our Christian heritage we may hear a temporal separation in these terms, the Hebrew tradition of the Creator-King did not bifurcate between nature and history and the tradition spoke of Yahweh's power as a creating↔redeeming activity.

B. CREATION↔REDEMPTION LANGUAGE IN II ISAIAH:

CONTROLLING THE LIMITS OF THE WATER CYCLE

The previous section discussed interpretations of the relationship between creation and redemption in II Isaiah. The contrasts

between the interpretations of Muilenburg, Westermann, and StuhlmueLLer and the Creator-King interpretation were focused to illumine the subtle shift of emphases to the creating↔redeeming activity of Yahweh. In the following discussion, I will show how Fisher's sequence of themes and Yahweh's control of the limits of the water cycle illustrate the presence of the Creator-King model in II Isaiah.

The application of Fisher's thesis to Ex. 15:1-18 in Chapter 2 attempted to describe the creation↔redemption model of Yahweh's activity as it was expressed in a series of themes that were adapted from the Baal cosmogony. These themes describe Yahweh who controls the water cycle or the limits between the forms of water and the forms of water's absence. This is the Creator-King whose control includes the Sea, the earth and the heavens. In our analysis of Ex. 15:1-18, we have noted that Yahweh both creates (קָנִי) and redeems (גָּאֵל) a people in a single act. Thus, we have suggested that the Yahwistic adaptation of the Baal story establishes a theological paradigm wherein the control of the water cycle language describes creation and redemption as mutually interrelated or reciprocal, i.e. creation↔redemption.

The hypothesis with which I approach an exegesis of II Isaiah is that it is possible to utilize early Yahwism's Creator-King adaptation of the Baal story's motifs and imagery. Other exegetes may presume "historical redemption" or "salvation history" or some other theological perspective. No theological paradigm can be imposed on the texts, however. Each theological paradigm should be applied and the one that best illumines the texts in their totality should be utilized in exegesis.

Loren Fisher has presented to Biblical scholarship the Creator-King theological position that admits no dualism between nature and history. For him, there is no separation between the creating power of God and God's redemptive, theopolitical acts³⁵ (like the Exodus event or the return from exile). Fisher comments that:

"In Deutero-Isaiah there is a unified vision; nature and history are one. When the Creator saves, he creates anew."³⁶

That all creation is a form of redemption and all redemption a form of creation is Fisher's theological exegetical insight. In this way there is no dualism between nature and history nor between redeemable men and women and endlessly cyclical nature. There is, rather, a continuity of nature and history. He describes this as a "...relational type of thinking..."³⁷ and claims

The fact that all is connected and that all has value does mean that we must care for creation with a sense of kinship for this, our larger community.³⁸

In several places Fisher calls our attention to themes of the Baal type which appear in the latter part of II Isaiah. It would be good to examine these so that creation language of the Baal type can be discerned more easily when we look elsewhere in the prophet's work. In Isa. 47:4, 48:2, 51:15, and 54:5 there appears a phrase "Yahweh of

³⁵Martin Buber, The Kingship of God (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 57.

³⁶Loren R. Fisher, "Mankind in Creation," Mid-Stream, XIII (Fall-Winter 1973-74), 45.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 46.

Hosts is his name." The phrase seems to be used only for God in a creation context. The shorter, older form, "Yahweh is his name," is found in Exodus 15:3, Amos 5:8, 9:6, and Jer. 33:2.³⁹

Starting with 51:9ff, Fisher sees a complete movement of the creation↔redemption form of conflict, kingship-enthronement, temple building (ordering cosmos), and banquet. He only outlines themes in the movement, but he says that there "...seems to be overlapping but progression in each movement." The opening hymn 51:9-16 expresses one of these themes in its movement. Here a noticeable theme in the hymn is the "arm of Yahweh" as the warrior-creator and 51:10 the proper name of the Canaanite chaos monster, Yamm (𐎶𐎵), is referred to directly without the article. Thus, in chapter 51, the predominant theme seems to be conflict.⁴⁰

In chapter 52, the kingship and enthronement of God is announced (Isa. 52:1-10). Then the new, "unhurried" exodus is proclaimed (Isa. 52:11-12). God's new creation which follows this conflict and kingship must be God's servant (52:13-53:12). This continues the theme of ordering. It ends with reference to the renewed covenant (Isa. 54:10) recalling God via Noah as the one who controls the waters of chaos (Isa. 54:9). In 54:11-12 God will build a new temple for the servant's return. Finally, in chapter 55, there is the return proper with the great

³⁹Loren R. Fisher, "From Chaos to Cosmos," Encounter, XXVI (1965), 193.

⁴⁰Loren R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," Vetus Testamentum, XV (1965), 323-4.

banquet. Fisher asks, "Is this just coincidence?"⁴¹

Thus, Fisher has described the presence of Creator-King themes in the latter part of II Isaiah. The intention of the exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 is to establish the possibility of using the non-dualistic creation↔redemption paradigm in another part of II Isaiah.

Such an investigation is necessary because there has been much notable literature published on "creation language" in II Isaiah⁴² and none of these articles have claimed that the creation↔redemption model of the Creator-King is the dominant perspective. Also, such an investigation must consider any similar creation↔redemption claims. At least two positions are noteworthy. These are found in Ph.B. Harner's article, "Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah,"⁴³ and in Carroll Stuhlmueller's book Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah.⁴⁴

⁴¹Ibid., p. 324.

⁴²Aage Bentzen, "On the Ideas of 'the Old' and 'the New' in Deutero-Isaiah," Studia Theologia, I (1947), 183. Thorleif Boman, "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," Church Quarterly Review, CLXV (1964), 140-151. Norman C. Habel, "Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth," A Study in Tradition Criticism, Journal of Biblical Literature, XCI (1962), 321-337. Norman C. Habel, "He Who Stretches Out the Heavens," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXXIV (1972), 417-430. Theodore M. Ludwig, "The Tradition of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXI (1973), 345-357. Herbert G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, Many Waters," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIV (1955), 9-21. Joseph L. Mielich, "The Concept of God in Deutero-Isaiah," Biblical Research, XI, (1966), 29-41. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "'First and Last' and 'Yahweh Creator' in Deutero-Isaiah," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXIX (1967), 495-511. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaiah," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXI, (1959), 429-467. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "Yahweh-King and Deutero-Isaiah," Biblical Research, XVI (1970), 32-45.

⁴³Ph.B. Harner, "Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah," Vetus Testamentum, XVII (1967), 298-306.

⁴⁴Carroll Stuhlmueller, Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), p. 300.

Although Harner marshalls a convincing argument that the creation motif is more than just a presupposition of the author and actually plays "a central and essential role,"⁴⁵ he still accepts the view that "Israelite faith was primarily oriented toward Yahweh's deeds of salvation in history."⁴⁶ Likewise StuhlmueLLer says:

"We have seen over and over again that Di-Is introduces creation as an aspect of redemption,"⁴⁷ and, "We fully accept...von Rad's conclusion about the subordinate role of creation in the Bk Con."⁴⁸

Thus, even though both approach the claim of creation↔redemption, they stay within the dominant vision of a theology of redemptive history.

The claim that the creation↔redemption paradigm of the Creator-King is the theological vision of II Isaiah is distinctive,⁴⁹ even though it is recognized by most scholars that in several places the themes of creation and redemption merge into one (cf. Isa. 51:9f). To verify this claim in the exegesis of II Isaiah, we need to recognize that both reorganization of already known facts and previously neglected facts will be important.⁵⁰

I will now present evidence for the creation↔redemption

⁴⁵Harner, "Creation Faith," p. 306.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 299.

⁴⁷StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 193.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁹Loren Fisher, "Mankind in Creation," p. 45.

⁵⁰Stan Rummell, "Human and Subhuman" The History of Israel as Ecology" (unpublished paper, December 1975), p. 27.

paradigm of the Creator-King, Yahweh, who controls the waters and, in doing so, controls the limits which make life possible. Most of the following passages are explicit instances of a contrast wherein Yahweh controls the extremes between some form or source of water and some form or situation wherein water is absent. They are examples taken from the Chart of the Control of the Water Cycle Language found in the Appendix of this study.

Isaiah 40:12	measured the waters
41:17	thirst
41:18	bare heights/valleys/wilderness/dryland
42:15	"dry up" herbage/pools/islands
43:2	fire/flame
43:16	a way/a path
43:19	wilderness/desert
43:20	wilderness/desert
44:3	thirsty land/dry ground
44:22	transgressions/sins
44:27	"be dry!" deep/rivers
48:21	deserts/rock
50:2	"dry up" sea/desert
51:10	"dry up" sea/deep/a way
54:9	Noah

In addition to this evidence, we should return to the compatible work of Carroll Stuhlmueller who, as we have seen, claims a theology of creative redemption for II Isaiah. Stuhlmueller points to examples of creative redemption in Isa 41:17-20; 43:1-7; 43:16-21. In Isa. 41:17-20,

most scholars recognize the Exodus motif⁵¹ and StuhlmueLLer says the final line (v. 20b) "...makes 'creation' a compendium of the preceding, longer description of the exodus."⁵² In the oracle of salvation in Isa. 43:1-7, the introduction and conclusion both contain the concept of Yahweh-Creator which "...summarize majestically the redemptive acts of Yahweh-go⁹el...."⁵³ In the next oracle of salvation, Isa. 43:16-21, there is a "...preoccupation with the present moment of a new exodus."⁵⁴ This is true not only of vs. 19-21, but also of vs. 16-17! If we utilize these already known facts within the Creator-King paradigm (cf. Isa. 43:15), then the "exodus" language in vs. 16-17 contains creation language too! Recognizing vs. 16-17 as being language about the Creator-King would allow StuhlmueLLer the possibility of speaking of creation↔redemption rather than creative redemption.⁵⁵ Also StuhlmueLLer's recognition that creation is a "compendium" and "summary" of the redemptive, exodus language points to a creation↔redemption emphasis.

Throughout this chapter, we have examined the relationship of creation and redemption in II Isaiah. In section A, the interpretations of this relationship given by Muilenburg, Westermann and StuhlmueLLer were contrasted with the creation↔redemption emphasis of the

⁵¹StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 71

⁵²Ibid., p. 73.

⁵³Ibid., p. 114.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 68.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 70. But note page 114 and elsewhere, where he speaks of "re-creation."

Creator-King. The Creator-King interpretation emphasizes that the creating and redeeming activities of Yahweh are not temporally separate. Yahweh both creates and provides the possibility of redemption in a single act.

In section B, I have shown that distinctive features of the Creator-King paradigm appear in II Isaiah. I have outlined Fisher's description of the series of themes, adapted from the Baal cosmogony, that are found in the latter part of II Isaiah. I have described how it would be possible to interpret the control of the limits of the water cycle in the exegesis of II Isaiah. I have also attempted to show why such an interpretation is necessary and how the creation↔redemption thesis is similar to, and partially compatible with, the theological interpretation of Carroll Stuhlmueller. This comparison with the interpretation of Stuhlmueller describes how the control of the limits of the water cycle can be used in the exegesis to illustrate the creation↔redemption activity of the Creator-King.

Thus, this chapter has contrasted the interpretations of creation and redemption given by Muilenburg, Westermann and Stuhlmueller with the creation↔redemption activity of the Creator-King. In this way, the groundwork for the application of the Creator-King thesis to the exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 has been laid and clarified.

Chapter 4

PROBLEMS WITH THE UNITY OF II ISAIAH

In the Introduction, we proposed that it is possible to read Isaiah 40-55 as if it were a unified literary expression of a past subject, whom we can call II Isaiah. However, most recent and current Biblical scholarship would not support such a claim. The barriers to such an interpretation have been both in the structure and content of these chapters. Structurally, the literary genres within these chapters have been isolated and separated according to their formal relations with the history of each genre. Having separated the text in this way, there has been a problem in discerning the unity of the materials. This is especially the case if the question of the identity of the servant in the "servant songs" is considered. With this question, the problem of unity moves from the structure also into the area of content. Is a coherent account of the combination of the literary genres and of the identity of the servant possible? These are the two primary problems which must be answered if our exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 is to be understood as the unified expression of a past subject.

A. THE PROBLEM OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:

FORM CRITICISM AND BEYOND

To focus the historiographical proposals that have been outlined, we must examine our methodological approach to the structure of II Isaiah. If we are interested in the actual experience of past subjects, what is the best methodology available for such investigation?

But, considering the many exegetical methodologies, can any one method claim to be exhaustive?

At present, the dominant school of Old Testament exegesis is the school of form criticism which is represented in our study by Claus Westermann. Fisher says that recently some exegetes have become "...skeptical about a form criticism that concentrates on small units and early stages of tradition."¹ In the introduction to his commentary on Isaiah, Muilenburg comments in the section on "unity" of the document:

...form critics...have properly attempted to understand the poems in the light of literary type and form. The result of this investigation has been to resolve the materials into a large number of small units....According to some of these scholars...the poems do not stand in any perceptibly logical relationship to one another and are therefore by no means to be interpreted in the light of each other.²

Antoon Schoors, who recently published "A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres in Isaiah 40-55," would seem to be one of those to whom Muilenburg speaks. Schoors says:

But the collection itself is a problem. It seems indeed impossible to demonstrate that Isaiah 40-55 has been composed according to a certain design.³

While Muilenburg asserts that in II Isaiah "...we often have a fusion of literary types, a combination of several forms to make a whole,"⁴

¹Loren R. Fisher, "The Patriarchal Cycles," Orient and Occident, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), pp. 59-61.

²James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," in Interpreters Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), V, 384.

³Antoon Schoors, I am God your Savior (Leiden: Brill, 1973), p. 29.

⁴Muilenburg, p. 385.

he also asserts that what form critics discern as independent genres are really strophes within a longer poem.⁵ When properly understood, Muilenburg claims, the strophes resolve themselves so that the continuity of the poems becomes clearer.⁶

But to be fair to Westermann it must be said that, unlike A. Schoors, he seems some arrangement and movement of themes in the first five chapters.⁷ Here he divides the text into a series of disputations and trial speeches followed by proclamations and oracles of salvation which are followed by more trial speeches, etc. A good example of this alternation can be seen running through 42:14-44:23. An eschatological hymn of praise ends such a series (cf. 42:10-13, or 44:23).

In 1969 Muilenburg published an article, "Form Criticism and Beyond," in which he proclaimed that, due to form criticism's disregard for literary criticism, there are "...features in the literary compositions which lie beyond the province of the Gattungsforscher."⁸

"What I am interested in...above all, is in understanding the nature of Hebrew literary composition. In exhibiting the structural patterns that are employed for the fashioning of a literary unit, whether in poetry or in prose, and in discerning the many and various devices by which the predications are formulated into a unified whole. Such an enterprise I should describe as rhetoric and the methodology as rhetorical criticism."⁹

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), p. 28.

⁸James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVIII (1969), 7.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

"And this leads me to formulate a canon which should be obvious to us all: a responsible and proper articulation of the works in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulations will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer's thought, not only what it is that he thinks, but as he thinks it."¹⁰

Thus, Muilenburg claims that the small form critical units are actually components of longer "poems" that share a continuity. We should remember, too, that Muilenburg sees II Isaiah as primarily a written work of poems which "...may have been delivered...or he may have sent them to various groups...."¹¹ Considering our interest in the actual experience of II Isaiah, it is important to recognize that Muilenburg claims that the reader can, by rhetorical criticism, get back to the writer's thought "...as he thinks it." If we analyze II Isaiah into smaller units with no perceptible relationships to one another, the effort to get at the actual experience of "II Isaiah" is ruled out apriori. Muilenburg feels that, by itself alone, "...form criticism resists all efforts to gain a psychological understanding of an author or to sense the concrete historical situation in which he spoke."¹²

Muilenburg's rhetorical analysis includes historical, literary, and form criticism as well as traditio-historical criticism.¹³ He explains his understanding of literary genres:

...in numerous contexts old literary types and forms are

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 386.

¹²Bernard W. Anderson, "The New Frontier of Rhetorical Criticism," in Jaren J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (ed.) Rhetorical Criticism (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974), p. xiii.

¹³James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," in Studia Biblica et Semitica (Wageningen: Veeman, 1966), 250-51.

imitated, and, precisely because they are imitated, they are employed with considerable fluidity, versatility, and, if one may venture the term, artistry.¹⁴

The concerns of the rhetorical critic should be first to determine the limits of the literary unit - how it begins and ends.¹⁵ Next, one must analyze the structure and balance,¹⁶ the rhetorical devices employed for sequence and movement within the diverse parallelism.¹⁷ Then one must concentrate on the key words,¹⁸ ideological patterns and motifs within the unit.¹⁹ But it is also imperative to recognize that every unit is set in a context, whether literary, historical, cultic, or theological, that gives it continuity with what came before and with what follows.²⁰ This recognition is allowed because of Muilenburg's emphasis that literary composition is formulated into a unified whole as an expression of the thought of the writer. This emphasis on the unity possible within distinct units of composition makes an approach to the actual experience of II Isaiah possible.

There have been some recent movements by form critics to overcome the atomistic approach of isolating genres without discerning

¹⁴ Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," p. 7.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8-9.

¹⁶ Anderson, p. xi.

¹⁷ Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," p. 10.

¹⁸ Anderson, p. xi.

¹⁹ James Muilenburg, "Problems in Biblical Hermeneutics," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVII (1958), 23.

²⁰ Ibid.

overall thematic unity. Usually this has resulted because the form critics themselves have attempted to include other methodologies within the form critical approach. But regarding the unity of II Isaiah, two of the most recent form critical studies still consider these chapters to be a collection of independent units. The first is the work of Antoon Schoors whom we have mentioned. The second is a work published in 1976 by Roy Melugin.²¹

From this cursory explanation of rhetorical and form criticism, we can see that these different procedures will result in different analyses and emphases. By attempting to "understand the nature of Hebrew literary composition" Muilenburg assumes the possibility that the literary units, like the longer poems he discerns in II Isaiah, have been unified into the thematic whole.²² By searching for indications of "movement" and "stress" in the poems,²³ he includes the more dramatic aspects that can emphasize this thematic whole. Although Muilenburg isolates different poems than we will propose, Muilenburg's rhetorical criticism is applicable to the "poetry" of II Isaiah and compatible with our investigation. He would claim that the utilization of several methodologies within a rhetorical consideration of spoken and/or literary emphases does not destroy the uniqueness of each genre and leads us

²¹Roy Melugin, The Formation of Isaiah 40-55 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), p. 175.

²²Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," p. 8.

²³Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 386-93. Also see James Muilenburg, "A Study in Hebrew Style and Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," supplement to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 97-111, and James Muilenburg, "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle" in the Old Testament," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXXII (1961), 135-60.

beyond form criticism.

B. AN INTERNAL, TEXTUAL PROBLEM:

THE SERVANT AND THE SERVANT SONGS

In the previous section, I have described a methodological approach which would allow Isaiah 40-55 to be interpreted as the literary expression of a past subject. In the process, I agreed with Muilenburg and Westermann that Isaiah 40-55 is a unified literary expression of II Isaiah. We will now deal with the question of the identity of the servant in Isaiah 40-55. This is the second barrier to the acceptance of the unity of these chapters.

In order to adequately analyze the responses that have been given to this problem by Biblical scholars, I will first consider the servant problem by contrasting it to the answers that have been given to the question of structural unity. These questions are: (1) Is II Isaiah a unified composition or a collection of individual units to which the servant songs were added? (2) Is II Isaiah a unified composition or a collection of individual units which originally contained these servant songs? (3) Is II Isaiah an ununified collection which originally contained or did not contain these "songs"?

As we have seen, the answers to these questions may, in part, depend on the methodology that an exegete utilizes. The answers may also depend on the exegete's estimate of the theology of II Isaiah and on whether or not the servant in the songs is an individual or some form of group, like Israel.

We will first outline some of the responses given to each of

the above questions by three of the interpreters considered in this paper--Westermann, Muilenburg, and Waterman. Next, we will summarize the various proposals that have been made concerning the servant in the servant songs and in II Isaiah. Finally, I will offer my own conclusions.

(1) Claus Westermann is a form critic who sees "a deliberate arrangement" in a collection of individual units to which the servant songs were a later addition. The songs form a separate "strand" from the rest of II Isaiah. The final one presupposes the servant's death. They were all added at the same time, but it is difficult for Westermann to see why the first three were placed in their present contexts.²⁴

(2) James Muilenburg and Leroy Waterman both consider II Isaiah to be a unified composition that originally contained the servant songs.²⁵ Waterman asserts that all the songs "...form a firmly knit and structural part of the author's thesis."²⁶ Muilenburg says that "...the excision of the four servant poems, far from resolving difficulties, has only added to them."²⁷ Therefore, he suspects that Bernard Duhm's original theory is false.²⁸ Both Muilenburg and Waterman feel that the songs are connected to their contexts and to the rest of II Isaiah. For example, in their discussion of 42:1-4, they see the servant as some

²⁴Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 28-9.

²⁵Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 406-7. Leroy Waterman, Forerunners of Jesus (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 146.

²⁶Waterman, p. 146.

²⁷Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 406.

²⁸James Muilenburg, [Book Review] "The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah," By Johannes Lindblom, Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXI (1952), 259-261.

sort of "collective"²⁹ Israel, while Westermann thinks the servant characterizes an individual.³⁰ To establish his claim, Muilenburg lists thematic relationships between the first two songs and the rest of II Isaiah.³¹ Waterman says that in 42:1-4 II Isaiah "...describes primarily the universal calling and functions of the servant, Israel, and his assured future."³² This "lofty portrait" is followed by an account of who has done this calling, the creator of the heavens and the earth (42:5-8).

(3) Otto Eissfeldt, C. R. North, and N. H. Snaith describe II Isaiah as an ununified collection of poems which originally contained the servant song poems.³³ Eissfeldt sees the servant as being "... both identical with Israel and at the same time also not identical."³⁴ North understands a development in the prophet's thought from a collective Israel to a future individual.³⁵

Sigmund Mowinckel views II Isaiah as a loosely connected series of units to which the servant songs were added by dissident disciples

²⁹Waterman, p. 41. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 463f.

³⁰Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 92f.

³¹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 407.

³²Waterman, p. 41.

³³Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 340. Christopher P. North, The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 214. N. H. Snaith, "The So-Called Servant Songs," Expository Times, LVI (1956), 80.

³⁴Eissfeldt, p. 341.

³⁵North, p. 216. H. H. Rowley, The Servant of the Lord (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 355.

who were unsatisfied with II Isaiah's designation of Cyrus as Messiah.³⁶

Considering various proposals that have been made concerning the unity and identity of the servant, we may add the name of Karl Budde who earlier in the century saw that II Isaiah was built up according to a deliberate plan.³⁷ Following Mowinckel, scholars like Hugo Gressmann, Ludwig Köhler, and Paul Volz denied such a unity and separated the sixteen chapters into 49, 70, and 50 units respectively.³⁸ In addition to those already described who feel that the servant songs belong in II Isaiah, we may add Aage Bentzen,³⁹ V. de Leeuw,⁴⁰ and (only the first three songs) Ernst Sellin and Karl Elliger.⁴¹ Following Duhm, others, like Joachim Begrich, have separated the servant songs from their context.

Aage Bentzen has stated the basic problem concerning the servant songs, as separated by Duhm, like this:

The main question is, whether the contents of the songs are so different from the bulk of the Deutero-Isaianic prophesy that it becomes impossible to assume the same prophet behind both complexes....⁴²

³⁶Eissfeldt, p. 34-36.

³⁷Ibid., p. 334.

³⁸Ibid., p. 336.

³⁹Ibid., p. 112.

⁴⁰Muilenburg, "Problems in Biblical," p. 263.

⁴¹Eissfeldt, p. 334.

⁴²Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament (Copenhagen: Gad, 1967), I, 110.

Outside the servant songs, the servant is plainly Israel (Jacob).⁴³ But, who is the servant within the songs: an individual or a group? Scholars divide into many camps over this question.⁴⁴ There are those who see an historical individual in the servant songs. Some of those proposed have been Moses, Isaiah, Josiah, and Jeremiah.⁴⁵ Others have proposed that the servant was an anonymous contemporary of II Isaiah.⁴⁶ Mowinckel proposed, but subsequently abandoned, the theory that II Isaiah himself is the servant.⁴⁷ Others⁴⁸ have followed his lead. In his Introduction to the Old Testament, Aage Bentzen supports this theory but carries the case beyond the contrast of either individual or collective.⁴⁹

"'Ebed Yahweh is both the Messiah and Israel and Deutero-Isaiah and his band of disciples."⁵⁰

Both Muilenburg⁵¹ and Waterman⁵² (49:1-6) also believe that in some descriptions the prophet is the servant.

⁴³Isaiah 41:8;42:19;43:10;44:1;43:4;48:20.

⁴⁴I will basically follow North's outline of the "Servant Interpretation."

⁴⁵Eissfeldt, p. 192-4, and Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 409.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 194-5.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 195 and Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 408.

⁴⁸Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 408-9.

⁴⁹North, p. 215.

⁵⁰Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, I, 112-3.

⁵¹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 410.

⁵²Waterman, p. 53-4.

Ivan Engnell⁵³ and Hugo Grossman⁵⁴ have proposed that the servant derives from the Tammuz "myth" of a dying and rising sacral king. Engnell tried to prove that II Isaiah is "...an imitation of a liturgy for the annual festival of the enthronement of Yahweh."⁵⁵

Various collective interpretations have been suggested.⁵⁶ Muilenburg also suggests that the individualization language⁵⁷ applied to the servant can, in the ancient Oriental way of speaking, denote a community of persons, i.e. Israel.⁵⁸ He, thus, seems to combine a collective interpretation with an autobiographical interpretation. In addition, he draws parallels in literary language and style between Jeremiah and the servant songs.⁵⁹

The explanations offered by Henrik Nyberg, C. R. North, and H. H. Rowley represent other combinations of the collective and individual views.⁶⁰ Nyberg has drawn attention to the servant title as applied to Moses, Joshua, and David. He also points to the possibility

⁵³Ivan Engnell, "The Ebed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in Deutero-Isaiah," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XXIV (1948), 54-93.

⁵⁴Eissfeldt, p. 335.

⁵⁵Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, I, 111.

⁵⁶North, p. 202-7. H. W. Robinson, The Cross of the Servant: A Study in Deutero-Isaiah (London: Duckworth, 1926).

⁵⁷Cf. Isaiah 46:3-4; 47:1-3, 5, 7-8; 54:1-8 etc.

⁵⁸Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 409-10.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 407-8.

⁶⁰Eissfeldt, p. 335.

of an adaptation of the Cannanite servants of El - Danel and Keret. These figures are of a "patriarchal type" which combines both individual and collective.⁶¹ North and Rowley emphasize a developmental movement in the songs from Israel to a future individual.⁶² Both see a fluidity in the concept suggesting a "corporate personality." However, both North and Rowley feel that a Messianic figure unfairly suggests a Davidic Messiah.⁶³ Other scholars have suggested a Messianic interpretation.⁶⁴

Until recently I went along with the corporate personality understanding of Muilenburg, Rowley, and North. Then, after reading Waterman, I came to feel as though these scholars had never really gotten past the either collective or individual interpretations. Even though Muilenburg asserts the unity of the "songs" with the rest of II Isaiah, he is still caught up in trying to explain the either/or question in a passage like 49:1-6.⁶⁵ And, unlike North and Rowley I see no expected future individual. I do see a call for future individuals (cf. Isa. 43:6-7). However, this narrowing down of the servant in the "songs" does not lead to "an individual." If we really accept that the so-called songs are actually an integral part of the structure of the poetry, then this narrowing down is more like the finer defining of the

⁶¹Bentzen, Introduction to Old Testament, I, 111-2.

⁶²North, p. 215-6. Rowley, p. 53f.

⁶³North, p. 218. Rowley, p. 55-6, 63-93.

⁶⁴North, p. 207-18.

⁶⁵Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-55," p. 408-10, 565.

requirements for servanthood, as Waterman shows.⁶⁶ Also, if Cyrus is God's Messiah (Isa. 45:1), then there can be no Messianic interpretation in this servanthood concept.

Waterman has perceived a sensible, realistic description of the unity and message of II Isaiah. His description explains the unity of the "songs" in their context and avoids the individual or collective dilemma.⁶⁷ Waterman argues that this literary work was the outcome of "...a prolonged and strenuous debate..." which

"...resembles the speech of a speaker-advocate in London's Hyde Park who takes on his hecklers and painstakingly answers all their real objections. But when he has...won no definite following, he sits down...and presents in dramatized poetic form his entire argument, at the same time injecting into it the significant objections...and their answers."⁶⁸

Waterman feels that II Isaiah was God's servant in the manner which he proclaimed. II Isaiah used his own calling as "a yardstick of Israel's mission to the larger world (49:1-6)."⁶⁹ II Isaiah also drew a portrait of this new servant, Israel, from the divine standpoint (42:1-4).⁷⁰ Because of a massive attack by his hearers, II Isaiah is forced to defend his own integrity (50:4-9).⁷¹ Here the speaker is obviously not Israel, but is one who has accepted the new role of the

⁶⁶Waterman, p. 30-31. Loren R. Fisher, "History of Israel," Class Lecture, 4-27-76.

⁶⁷Waterman, p. 55.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 34. Cf. Also Comparative Structure Analyses.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 30.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 59.

servant.⁷² In 53:1-10a the person is described as having belonged to a previous generation (v.8) and as one who is already dead and buried (v.8,9,12c). The person who "sat for this portrait," Waterman claims, is Jeremiah.⁷³ The tragedy here is Israel's failure to appreciate Jeremiah as one of the greatest servants of Yahweh. Instead, the new servants can now see that "he was wounded by our transgressions" and he died without their appreciation.⁷⁴ This is the more coherent interpretation, given to the servant, Israel, in II Isaiah, that does not extend from a more myopic contrast between these four poems. Moreover, it means that the new role of the servant was more inclusive and, in order to be successful, demanded that II Isaiah had to accomplish his message in terms of individual commitments.

"Thus all the expressions of the servant had to be in individual terms. Even in the figure of Israel as a servant this was implicit."⁷⁵

This new kingdom on earth would only be built by generations of committed individuals.

Thus, Waterman and Muilenburg would agree that it is written in "dramatized poetic form." Waterman would emphasize that it was written to be read⁷⁶ while Muilenburg would stress more the "literary" styles of emphasis.⁷⁷ Muilenburg's stress seems to be not only that II Isaiah

⁷²Ibid., p. 30.

⁷³Ibid., p. 65.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 66.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 32.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁷⁷Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 384-5.

is poetry, but that it is a series of poems.⁷⁸ While I feel that Muilenburg is essentially correct in his rhetorical analysis and demand for the unity of all of II Isaiah, his emphasis on a continuity among distinct poems, rather than the description of II Isaiah as a poetical drama about a person encountering objections, leaves him with the problem of a coherent account of the individual and collective features of the servant "inside and outside" the poems. This problem also motivates Westermann to separate out these units as descriptions of an individual.⁷⁹

Thus, I would say with Muilenburg and Waterman that II Isaiah, including the "servant songs," is a unified literary composition. With Westermann, I would agree that many specific genres can be perceived. Also, I agree with Muilenburg that many of the genres are fluid "imitations" as the prophet adapts them to tell his own message. But in contrast to Muilenburg and Westermann, who employ a theological paradigm of historical redemption, and to Waterman, who discerns a developmental, ethical monotheism, I will employ the creation↔redemption model of Yahweh, the Creator-King, who controls the limits of the water cycle, and who calls and describes the servant, Israel, with both individual and collective language.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Cf. James Muilenburg [Book Review] "The Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary to Chapters XL-LV," by Christopher R. North, Interpretation, XIX (1965), 362.

⁷⁹ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 22.

Chapter 5

EXEGESIS OF ISAIAH 40-44:23

Leroy Waterman, an Assyriologist, has claimed to have identified three distinctive contributions of II Isaiah.¹ First, the concept of the ethical character of the one and only God of the universe (ethical monotheism), (2) the new interpretation of Israel as God's servant who must bear the message of Yahweh's salvation to the rest of humanity, and (3) the salvation of mankind in a kingdom of God on earth.² His basic charge against Biblical scholarship is that

These far-reaching concepts have thus been structurally left out of consideration...primarily because of modern interpreter's inability to agree how the terms and teachings of this prophesy were meant to be understood and applied, because of diverse views of certain personal aspects of the Servant Figure in these chapters.³

We have seen that Waterman would agree that both individual and collective aspects are inherent in II Isaiah's description of the new servant, Israel. But he has attempted to get at this by getting "inside" the actual experience of II Isaiah, using the three distinctive contributions of II Isaiah. These factors were both theological and political.⁴ On the theological side, Marduk who had been lauded as the one and only creator and sole God proved powerless to protect his

¹Leroy Waterman, Forerunners of Jesus (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 19,21.

²Ibid., p. 19-20.

³Ibid., p. 20.

⁴Ibid., p. 24.

kingdom.⁵ On the political side, this called for a complete reappraisal of the Jewish history, of Yahweh's justice.⁶ II Isaiah marshalls the truth of the prophets of doom as servants of Yahweh and proclaims that Yahweh punished Israel and that he is, therefore, an ethical God. The advent of Cyrus made these proclamations possible.⁷ Thus, Waterman's description demonstrates that II Isaiah can be read as the unified composition of an actual person and prophet.

While I have found no better interpretation of II Isaiah, I cannot agree with Waterman's developmental theology. We have claimed that early Israel was characterized by a movement from polytheism to monotheism. His definition of monotheism is that of "...increasing denial of other gods."⁸ Mine is something like refusal to divide the world into separate areas of control. Thus, for me, the one and only one emphasis is borrowed from Marduk and may be a new way of saying "Creator-King" or "Warrior," but it does not mean "monotheism." Waterman's definition of monotheism makes Paul Tillich not a montheist. Perhaps what makes Waterman's theology more applicable to an interpretation of II Isaiah as a subject is that he does not emphasize "history" as a basic theological category.

In the following exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23, we will basically use the structural analysis of Waterman's speaker-advocate confronting real objections to his message. We will use rhetorical criticism, but, unlike Muilenburg who intuits a series of "poems," we will regard II

⁵Ibid., p. 25.

⁶Ibid., p. 24, 26.

⁷Ibid., p. 26-7.

⁸Ibid., p. 21.

Isaiah as poetry which may not require the formal balance of poems. Thus, we will divide the text into different units than Muilenburg did. We will also find the form critical work of Claus Westermann, very helpful. Five objections appear in the chapters to be examined and in every instance Westermann describes these verses as a lament or as a trial speech in which a charge is brought against God by Israel (Isa. 43:26-8). The laments have the character of complaints against the prophet's message.

In the explanation of the creation↔redemption thesis in Chapter 2, we claimed that Yahweh's power was relational power. Loomer characterized relational power as "...the ability to both produce and undergo an effect." It is precisely in the responses of Yahweh to the laments of his people that this relational power is most evident in II Isaiah. The responses given to these laments are indicative of the relational power of the Creator-King. Not only was Yahweh affecting the world, but the laments of the Hebrew people had affected Yahweh. This is evident in the first verse of Chapter 40 where the command to "Comfort!" is a decision in contrast to a lament. Throughout the exegesis, it will be necessary to remember that Yahweh's responses to the laments and to the Hebrews' total situation are indications of this relational power.

A quick reference to the Comparative Structural Analysis Chart will show that where Muilenburg and Waterman disagree as to the structural division, eleven of the fifteen objections appear. This would lead one to suspect that a different understanding of the actual experience of II Isaiah might have allowed Muilenburg to divide the text

in a way more compatible to that of Waterman.

My exegesis and a thematic analysis is not intended to be sufficient proof of the creation↔redemption theological model for all of II Isaiah, but to suggest how themes that have been read as secondary and subordinate to a more dominant theme might be read in another way. My best judgment is that this different reading suggests the strong possibility of a model wherein the themes of creation and redemption merge as the same act of God, i.e. creation↔redemption.

In exegeting the text, I will attempt to show how the Baal thematic conversions to Yahwism can be read in light of their Creator-King meaning. Certainly these themes do not adequately express the total range of the prophet's imagery about creation↔redemption, but they do appear in crucial and climactic contexts. These themes are an illustration of old facts in a new framework.

Exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23

Textual division proposed: 40:1-11 (1-2,3-5,6-8,9-11)

Subdivisions: Westermann 1-2,3-5,6-8,9-11

Muilenburg 1-2,3-5,6-8,9-10,11

Waterman 1-2,3-5,6-8,9-11

Stuhlmueeller 1-2, (3-5,6a',6a"-7b,8,9-11)

Textual notes: Important words

v.2cde that (כי)

v.5b all flesh (כלבשר) (Isa. 49:26)

v.5c for (כי)

v.6c all flesh (כלהבשר) (Isa. 49:26)

- v.7a withers (יָבֵשׁ) (Isa. 40:24c)
 v.8a withers (יָבֵשׁ) (Isa. 40:24c)
 v.8b forever (לְעוֹלָם) (Isa. 40:28b)
 v.9g,10a,c Behold (הִנֵּה)
 v.10b arm (זְרֹעַ)
 v.11a shepherd (רֹעֶה) (Isa. 44:28)

Translation problem

- v.9b,d Oh herald of good tidings to Zion/Jerusalem
 (מְבַשֵּׂר צִיּוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם)

Structure analysis:⁹

vs.1-2 - Assurance of Salvation (Oracle of Salvation): Yahweh commands the council (cf.55:1f).

vs.3-5 - Judgment or decision of the council: The council (1st voice) announces the effects of the decision - a highway must be prepared.

vs. 6-8 - Argument or disputation: Fellow Hebrews interrupt (2nd voice) with "Cry" (vs.6a,6c-7) and the prophet responds to his fellows (vs. 6b,8).

vs.9-11 - Hymnic praise: a picture of the herald's proclamation to Jerusalem and of Yahweh's return with his servants.

Genre: Prologue with characteristics of an oracle of salvation in Psalmic style. It contains II Isaiah's message in nuce.¹⁰

Bibliography: Cross, Frank, Jr. "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah,"

⁹ Claus Westermann, Isaiah 40-66 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 49-50, 61-2.

¹⁰ Ibid. Cf. also p. 33.

Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XII (1953), p. 274-77.

Comments: vs.1-2 - Frank Cross has shown that the setting for verses 1-8 is "...the heavenly council in which Yahweh addresses his her-alds...."¹¹ The theological question is, "Is the 'King' here announcing 'historical redemption'¹² or 'God's new act'¹³ or is this the Creator-King of the Fisher hypothesis?" In the Baal story, Baal was both King and Judge. Therefore, it also must be emphasized that the Creator-King is here acting as Savior and Judge. The divine council is also a judicial court where Yahweh's decisions are made¹⁴(cf.Ps.82). The judgment is an acquittal - a reversal of previous convictions.¹⁵ This reversal is emphasized as the divine decision by a threefold use of the emphatic particle ׀ . Muilenburg has shown that this particle is used for crucial or climactic emphasis.¹⁶ Westermann says that this cry is linked directly to the command to "Depart, Depart..." in 52:11, and thus, "...from the very start securely linked with the Exodus tradition...."¹⁷ He also suggests that this decision is a contrast to a

¹¹Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XII (1953, 274-277. Also see H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," Journal of Theological Studies, XLV (1945), p. 151-57.

¹²James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," in Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1956), p. 422-4.

¹³Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 33.

¹⁴Patrick D. Miller, Jr., The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 67-8.

¹⁵Amos 3; Hosea 4; Micah 6; Jeremiah 7; Isaiah 6.

¹⁶James Muilenburg, "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle ׀ in the Old Testament," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXXII (1961), 135-60.

¹⁷Westermann, p. 33.

lament (cf. Lam. 2:13, Isa. 51:9). Thus, Yahweh is Savior to these exiles as he was to those in Egypt. This total proclamation has the character of the element of an assurance of salvation from an oracle of salvation. This response is also an example of Yahweh's relational power.

vs. 3-5 - But what proof was there that Israel's sin was really pardoned?¹⁸ An announcement of a great processional way through the wilderness gives the answer. This "way" is a recurring theme¹⁹ and has been correctly compared by Muilenburg,²⁰ Westermann,²¹ StuhlmueLLer,²² and Waterman²³ to the processional highway cleared for the great processions of the gods of Babylon. The call to prepare this highway already assumes the release of the exiles. The way is prepared for divine royalty - the Creator-King. Its implicit emphasis is on a new exodus and a re-creation of Israel. However, the emphasis does not totally fall on Israel because verse 5b proclaims that the glory of the Lord will be revealed to "all flesh," not human beings only. This is the first reference to the way in which II Isaiah claims that "all flesh" are subjects who can perceive Yahweh's glory. Westermann acknowledges this when he says, "...when Yahweh's glory was revealed, the contemporary

¹⁸Waterman, p. 35.

¹⁹See Isa. 42:16; 43:16, 19.

²⁰Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 427.

²¹Westermann, p. 38-9.

²²Carroll StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), p. 74f.

²³Waterman, p. 35.

world could not but realize...."²⁴ Why is this new, unparalleled revelation to occur? The mouth of the Lord has spoken (vs.1-2). Both Westermann and Muilenburg correctly emphasize that this "way" refers to an actual historical event.²⁵ But the sense of historical events spoken of in these verses is wider than the usual sense of historicity. It includes "all flesh" and so connects into a unity both nature and "history." This emphasis on the contemporary world situation and actual events as "history" dominates the feeling of II Isaiah. His understanding of the contemporary world situation is a unity of what we in the West have called "nature" and "history." Thus, creation and history are a unity in II Isaiah.

vs.6-8 - Westermann says the command in v.6a is immediately followed "...by a word that reacts against it."²⁶ Verses 6c-7 constitute a lament form found in the Psalms.²⁷ Waterman says that this is the first pessimistic objection from a disheartened people. The word "withers" derives from the verb (יָבֵשׁ) "to dry up." This is a direct rejection of Yahweh, the Creator-King. He has no power to give life; everything withers and dies. In verse 8 the prophet gives his answer.²⁸ The word מַלְלָל also describes Baal's kingdom in Ugaritic text 68:10. Muilenburg sees verse 8 as meaning a power within "history."²⁹

²⁴Westermann, p. 39.

²⁵Ibid. and Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 427.

²⁶Ibid., p. 40.

²⁷Ibid., p. 41

²⁸Waterman, p. 35-6.

²⁹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 430.

Westermann says that the "Word of God" which was spoken in Israel's history abides.³⁰ Both men point to the connection between this focus and the verses which conclude the entire book in 55:10f. Verse 8 indicates that the words spoken in vs.1-2 have efficacy in the world. God's word is not "empty" (Isa. 55:11).

vs.9-11 - After the objection has been answered II Isaiah does not continue describing the processional way, the reason for it, or its goal.³¹ Instead, he shifts the scene to the moment when his message will be fulfilled by the servants who are the heralds of good news to Zion, "Behold your God!" Just as the way must be prepared, so Yahweh needs messengers to proclaim this good news (cf. Isa. 52:7). Through the three-fold repetition of "behold" (הִנֵּה), the emphasis of the unit falls on verses 9g-11.³²

Westermann says that vs. 9-11 is an old epiphany which pictures the "...mighty intervention," in the literary style of an eschatological psalm of praise.³³ Westermann says

These old epiphanies always depict Yahweh's advent as a bipolar event: he comes as the mighty...but also as he who condescends to his people in their need...."³⁴

These are the two motifs of the Creator-King that appear in verses 10b and 11a. They are the "arm" of Yahweh, and Yahweh as "shepherd." The

³⁰Westermann, p. 42.

³¹Waterman, p. 36.

³²Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 432.

³³Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 44-45.

³⁴Ibid., p. 45.

"arm of Yahweh" appears in 51:9b and is reminiscent of the more ancient victory songs like Ex.15:1-18. In the Ugaritic texts, the "arm" represents the "man of war" (Anat.III:11) who in conflict with Yamm, wins his kingship and is "Lord of the earth" (Anat.I:3). Muilenburg says that "...Yahweh comes as conquerer and victor; as king to bring in his kingdom..." and the "arm" is his "...instrument of redemption...."³⁵ Under the Fisher hypothesis, Yahweh would also be the Creator-King. The other interest is in verse eleven's picture of Yahweh as shepherd. One of the epithets for Baal is Hadd (cf. Ugaritic 51:VII:37;67:I:23; 76:II5,III:9). In Ugaritic text 603, Baal and Hadd, the shepherd (r'y), are used in parallel.³⁶ Apparently, in the Baal sense, the shepherd was also the Creator-King and warrior.

Textual division proposed: 40:12-31(12-16,18-24,25-6,27-31)

Subdivisions: Westermann 12-17, (18,21-4),25-6,27-31

Muilenburg 12,13-4,15-7,18-20,21-4,25-7,28-31

Waterman 12-26 (12-17,18-26) 27-31 (27,28-31)

StuhlmueLLer 12-17, (18,21-4), 25-6,27-31

Textual notes: Important words

v.12 waters (מים)

v.15a drop (כמר)

v.24c wither (ויבשר)

v.25b Holy One (קדוש)

v.28b everlasting (עולם)

³⁵Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 432.

³⁶Loren R. Fisher and F. Brent Knutson, "An Enthronement Ritual at Ugarit," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XXVIII (July 1969), 157-67.

Structure analysis:

vs.12-17 - A series of disputation questions (vs.12-14) are couched in language of descriptive praise.³⁷ A twofold "Behold" shows the climax of the unit (v.15a,c). The climax (vs.15ff.) is almost like a judicial decision (cf. Isa.41:29).

vs.18-24 - More disputation questions (vs.18,21) structure these verses. They also display a hymnic character.³⁸

vs.25-6 - Disputation questions also characterize these hymnic verses (cf. vs. 25-26b). The theme of the heavens (cf.v.22cd) is here expanded.

vs.27-31 - These verses are introduced by a stated disputation (v.27) and verse 28 responds with the counter disputation questions found in v. 21. The verses which follow are clearly modeled on the structure of the hymns of descriptive praise.³⁹ Thus, a disputation is turned into a hymn of praise.

Genre: A counter disputation within a longer disputation which is formed on the model of a descriptive psalm of praise.⁴⁰

Bibliography: Habel, Norman C. "He who Stretches Out the Heavens," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXXIV (1972), 417-30. Ludwig, Theodore M., "The Tradition of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,"

³⁷Westermann, p. 48-9.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 49. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 434.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 61-2.

Journal of Biblical Literature, XCI (1973), 345-57.

Comments: Westermann⁴¹ understands that the units of this longer poem contrast the Creator and the Lord of history. Muilenburg sees the emphasis on lordship over nature and history.⁴² However, we have emphasized that II Isaiah considers creation or nature and history to be a unity. Therefore, when the Creator-King paradigm is recognized there is no real need to separate God's influence in creating from his activity in human history. But the background question to the disputation questions in verses 12-26 is "Can our God really help us?"⁴³ The first three units may be in preparation for v.27, but they also are in part a response to the first objection (vs.6c-7)⁴⁴ and further explanation of verse 8.

v.12-17 - Following the prologue's triumphal picture the question may remain, "But who is this God?"⁴⁵ Both Westermann⁴⁶ and Muilenburg⁴⁷ stress the cosmic structure of the universe implied in waters, heaven, earth, mountains, and hills. Some would want to amend "waters" to "seas" for a better triad. From our understanding that Yahweh controls the "waters," in all its forms, this would not be necessary. It is

⁴¹Claus Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), p. 49, 127.

⁴²Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 434, 438, 441.

⁴³Westermann, The Praise of God, p. 48.

⁴⁴Waterman, p. 52.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁶Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 50.

⁴⁷Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 435.

precisely the "waters" of the rivers, springs, and rain that bind together into one the heavens and the earth. Verse 12 is a monotheistic statement saying that these cosmic limits are not under the Kingship of separate dieties. Verses 13-14 have obvious wisdom vocabulary. The rhetorical questions here give the omniscient characteristics of this God.

Both Westermann and Muilenburg see "the nations" or "history" as the focus of vs. 15-17.⁴⁸ They are correct in seeing that the focus is quickly brought from the cosmic limits and the wisdom and justice of the Creator-King to the nations--his majesty as compared to all their greatness. The emphases are on the incomparable majesty and wisdom of the Creator, on the wondrous nature of his creation, and on the minuteness of the nations and islands.

vs.18-24 - In response to the opening rhetorical question, this "disputation" is saying, "Are you thinking of the splendid idol image of Marduk?"⁴⁹ Westermann and Muilenburg call our attention to the fact that vs.18-20 repeat the Mosaic tenet of an imageless God.⁵⁰ Westermann also notes that the first two commandments of the Decalogue impress the close connection between the incomparability of Yahweh and the impossibility of reducing him to an image.⁵¹ This "God" named in v.18 is 78 . The verses describing idol-making should not be removed as

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 438. Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 51-53.

⁴⁹Waterman, p. 37.

⁵⁰Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 439. Cf. also Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 54-5.

⁵¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 55.

secondary. The mere description of idol-making contrasted with the question of verse 18 provide II Isaiah with an incontestible polemic. The next series of disputation questions directs and focuses the exiles' response to the idolatry portrayed. Westermann points to the psalmic character of vs.22-3.⁵² He says that in order to lay the ground for his message of comfort, II Isaiah must revive the songs of praise. Thus, part of this revival is the emphasis on Yahweh as the Lord of history in vs.23-4 (cf.vs.15-17).⁵³ The contrast in vs.22-4 is again (cf.vs.12-7) between the Creator and the "nothingness" of the "great" and "powerful" rulers of the nations. Thus, the emphases are on idolatry and the transcendence of all human "princes" and "rulers" compared to the majestic Creator and his vast creation.

vs.25-26 - These verses are a polemic against the astral worship of the Babylonians.⁵⁴ Westermann says that "...the boldness of the oracle is quite amazing."⁵⁵ In this polemic II Isaiah uses the favorite phrase of Isaiah⁵⁶ to emphasize that the astral bodies were created by Yahweh and subject to his Lordship. Stuhlmueeller calls our attention to the fact that in v.26 the hearers are asked to contemplate "...the stars in in the contemporary moment."⁵⁷ Here, Yahweh "names" the celestial

⁵²Ibid., p. 56. Also see Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 440.

⁵³Ibid., p. 56-7.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 58. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 443.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), II, 327.

⁵⁷Stuhlmueeller, Creative Redemption, p. 149.

bodies and "shepherds" then, so that none are missing. The emphasis is on the incomparable majesty and power of the Creator and his created heavenly host.

vs.27-31 - However, the exiles have not been convinced by these "disputations" concerning the identity and power of Yahweh.⁵⁸ In v.27 the real feelings of the despondency and despair of his hearers (Jacob-Israel) again burst forth in their second objection.⁵⁹ The form of this charge against Yahweh is a lament that was probably current in the exiled community's worship.⁶⁰ Muilenburg says that this accusation underlies the whole poem.⁶¹ Both Westermann⁶² and Muilenburg⁶³ point to verse 28 as the focus of the disputation. It is the immediate answer to the objection. If this is correct, a connection to the paradigm of Yahweh as the Creator-King is the word עולם which means "everlasting." The same word appears in Ugaritic, ʿlm, and is used to describe the kingdom that Baal wins when he defeats Yamm (Ugaritic text 68:10). The root is twice repeated in text 51:IV:42 in describing the wisdom of El immediately before Baal is proclaimed "King." The use of this adjective in the crucial focus of the poem, which answers the objection, points to the creation↔redemption model of Yahweh as Creator-

⁵⁸Waterman, p. 36.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 59. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 435.

⁶⁰Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 59.

⁶¹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 444.

⁶²Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 48.

⁶³Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 435.

King.

Westermann says that vs.29-31 answer the question, "Does God really care for us?"⁶⁴ It is the language of psalmic praise which "comforts" the despondent⁶⁵ and exalts the servant. Waterman says the replay, verses 28-31, emphasizes "...the everlasting power, steadfastness, and unsearchable understanding of God."⁶⁶ The disputation becomes a hymn exalting the Creator.

Textual division proposed: 41:1-13 (1-7,8-13)

Subdivisions: Westermann 1-5,8-13

Muilenburg [41:1-42:4] 1,2-4,5-7,8-13

Waterman [1-13] 1-4,5-7,8-13

StuhlmueLLer 1-5,8-13

Textual notes: Important words

v.9c you are my servant (עבדי אחה)

v.10a Fear not (כי) I am with you (אל תירא) (Ex.3:12)

v.10b (כי) I am your God (אני אלהיך)

v.10d with my saving right hand (בימיני צדקי) (Ex.15:6)

v.11a Behold (הן)

v.13a (כי) I am the Lord your God (אני יהוה אלהיך)

v.13b your right hand (ימינך)

v.13cd Fear not, I will help you (אל תירא אני עוזיך)

⁶⁴Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 48.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 60-1.

⁶⁶Waterman, p. 38.

Structure analysis:⁶⁷

- 41:1 Summons to trial
- 41:2-4b Evidence of Yahweh
- : 2a, 4a Questions to other parties
- 41:4cd Decision
- 41:5-7 Effects of decision

Genre: Trial speech.⁶⁸

Comments: vs.1-7 - Westermann calls this a trial speech and both he and Muilenburg claim that these verses deal with "history"⁶⁹ and the "Lord of history."⁷⁰ But Waterman gives a picture of these events without emphasizing "history" when he says:

...the prophet turns to the immediate world situation as it centers in the conquests of Cyrus to show that it is also a part of God's plan.⁷¹

As we have emphasized, this activity of Yahweh in the immediate present is creating↔redeeming activity of the Creator-King. We are not saying that God is not acting in human history, or in history considered as "the past" (cf. Isa. 40:21). But to emphasize "history" here⁷² is to present a division that need not obtain since the Old Testament does not distinguish between the realms of history and nature. This is a

⁶⁷Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 64f.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 64-5.

⁷⁰Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 447-51.

⁷¹Waterman, p. 38.

⁷²Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 453 and James Muilenburg, "The Speech of Theophany," Harvard University Bulletin, XXVIII (1964), 46.

trial speech and God may be Judge, but its court setting may not be only in human history.⁷³ Westermann claims that the court setting is civil, not criminal, and that II Isaiah creates a new literary genre.⁷⁴ Its "immediate setting" may be "the ends of the earth" (v.28c) or the waters, earth, mountains, and hills (v.12), i.e., the cosmos, or the immediate world situation. In some trial scenes from the ancient Near East, these cosmic limits act as the jury. This is also the case in Micah 6.

The point at issue in the trial is, "Who has done this?"⁷⁵ It is a claim of divinity.⁷⁶ The evidence is given in vs. 2-3 after the summons (v.1). The Judge speaks the verdict in verse 4cd. Muilenburg says this is reminiscent of the theophany at Sinai (Ex.20:2).⁷⁷ Westermann would remove vs.6-7, but Muilenburg says that without them the final judgment in 41:29 makes no sense.⁷⁸ Muilenburg is right. These verses provide for an intelligible reaction on the part of the coastlands. Trembling in response, all they can think of doing is building more idols.⁷⁹

⁷³Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 447-8.

⁷⁴Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 63.

⁷⁵Waterman, p. 38.

⁷⁶Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 63.

⁷⁷Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 450.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 452.

⁷⁹Waterman, p. 38.

Structure analysis, vs. 8-13:⁸⁰

- Isaiah 41:8-9 An address with appositions
- 41:10a Assurance of salvation
- 41:10ab Substantiation - noun clause
- 41:10cd Substantiation - verb clause
- 41:11-12 Results
- 41:13 Repetition of assurance of salvation and
substantiation

Genre: An oracle of salvation without the "purpose" or "goal" clause⁸¹
in a trial setting.

Comments: Following from the judgment and description of the effects, there is something like another judgment or description of yet further effects from the judgment in v. 4. This oracle of salvation is placed in a new setting - the trial speech. It is an expansion of the acquittal proclaimed in 40:1-2. Previous judgments against Israel may be found in Hosea 4, Amos 3, Micah 6, and Jeremiah 7.⁸²

As part of this "world situation,"⁸³ Yahweh addresses the exiles, for the first time, as Israel, Jacob, Abraham, and my servant. Verses 8-9b present a summary of God's past dealings with his people.⁸⁴

⁸⁰Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 69f. Stuhlmueller, Creative Redemption, p. 265. Antoon Schoors, I Am God Your Savior (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 47f.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Loren R. Fisher, "II Isaiah," class lecture, 3-5-74.

⁸³Waterman, p. 38.

⁸⁴Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 70.

Verse 9ab presents this as a very universal activity (cf. Isa. 43:6-7). The proof that the judgment (v.4) was not against Israel, Yahweh's servant, comes in the theophany in verses 9c-13. Muilenburg says that here God "...speaks the words which the gods of nature could never speak."⁸⁵ Westermann gives support for the Creator-King theology of Yahweh when he suggests that the cry "Fear not!" is the central point of the oracle (vs.10a,13c) and that it has "very close affinities" with Yahweh as the man of war.⁸⁶ In addition, the pledge that Yahweh makes is, again, Mosaic. "For I am with you" (v.10a) is found in Ex.3:12 and "I am your God" is reminiscent of Ex.20:2. Verse 10cd presents a threefold assurance⁸⁷ that Yahweh will keep his pledge because of his "saving right hand." We have seen that this distinctive characteristic of the Man of War (Ex.15:6,12,16) was adapted by the early Hebrews in contrast to Baal. Surely, this theophany comes from the Creator-King whose right arm now brings a new exodus. Muilenburg notes that verse 13a repeats, with an emphatic particle, the assurance "I am the Lord your God" which is taken exactly from Ex.20:2. It is Mosaic covenantal language.⁸⁸

Textual division proposed: 41:14-29(14-6,17-20,21-9)

Subdivisions: Westermann 14-6,17-20,21-9

⁸⁵Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 453.

⁸⁶Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 71

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 73.

⁸⁸Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 456.

Muilenburg [41:1-42:4] 14-6,17-20,21-4,25-9

Waterman [4-29] 14-6,17-20,21-4,25-9

Stuhlmueeller 14-6,17-20,21-9

Textual notes: Important words

- v.14a worm (תולעת) (Ps.22:7)
- v.17a water (מים)
- v.17c Parched with thirst (בצמא נשתה)
- v.18a open rivers (אפתח נהרות)
bare heights (על שפיים)
- v.18b fountains (מעיינות)
valleys (בקעות)
- v.18c make a pool of water (אשים לאגם מים)
desert (מדבר)
- v.18d springs of water (למוצאי מים)
dry land (וארץ ציה)
- v.19a I put in the wilderness (אתן במדבר)
- v.19c I set in the desert (אשים בערבה)
- v.20c (כי) the hand of Yahweh (יד יהוה)
- v.20d has created (בראה)
- v.21b King of Jacob (מלך יעקב)
- v.27b herald of good tidings (מבשר)

Structure analysis, vs.14-6:⁸⁹

⁸⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 74f. Stuhlmueeller, Creative Redemption, p. 265. Schoors, I Am God, p. 47, 58f.

Isaiah 41:14ab	Brief address
41:14ab	Assurances of salvation
41:14c	Substantiation - verb clause
:14d	Substantiation - noun clause
41:15-16ab	Results
41:16cd	Goal: a vow of praise of the psalms of lamentation

Genre: An abbreviated form of an oracle of salvation⁹⁰ with some of the elements in mixed order (cf.v.14) and placed in a trial setting.

Comments: At this juncture, the prophet can see that this oracle of salvation (vs.8-13), this acquittal, only seems to raise doubts in his hearers about their ability and strength to face the obstacles of the return journey.⁹¹ His audience has failed to follow his vision. This estimate of themselves is echoed in the theophanic charge "You worm Jacob."⁹² They feel as helpless as worms. This is the third objection or doubt and marks a serious barrier to the prophet's effort to persuade his people.

This objection is couched in the style of a lament⁹³ (Ps.22:7). The theophanic phrase "Fear not!" shows that Yahweh speaks again to comfort Jacob-Israel. He reminds them of the assurance of his pledge, "I will help you" (cf.v.13d). Who says this? The Holy One of Israel

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Waterman, p. 39.

⁹²Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 457.

⁹³Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 75.

is your Redeemer.⁹⁴ Their doubt has been taken up into an encouragement with repeated assurance from their kinsman (go²el). Next, Yahweh, paints a vision of the results of his pledge. They will become a threshing sledge creating a highway through the mountains and hills toward Zion (cf. Isa.40:4). The oracle ends with a vow of praise taken from an individual psalm of lament (v.16cd).⁹⁵

Structure analysis, vs. 17-20:⁹⁶

Isaiah 41:17ab	An allusion to a lament
41:17c-19	Proclamation of salvation
:17cd	God's answer to the lament
41:18-19	God's activity following from his answer
41:20	The goal in view

Genre: A proclamation of salvation⁹⁷ placed in a trial setting.

Comments: Westermann says that this proclamation of salvation has affinities with a community lament.⁹⁸ No direct address is needed because it is a continuation of the theophany of vs. 14-16. Westermann characterizes v. 17ab as a summary of a community lament concerning the ancient problem of "drought."⁹⁹ This is a reminder to them of he who controls the waters. From their early history to the present, they

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 75, cf. Isaiah 1:4.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 77.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 79f. Schoors, I Am God, p. 85f.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 77.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 80.

have known this one is Yahweh. He will not forsake them on the return. This is imagery of the new exodus. The vision that the prophet proclaims is the most obvious reference so far to the power of the Creator-King. What further assurance could the prophet offer the people who will be seeking water with parched throats? What can this God of Israel do to help? Why, he controls the waters! He controls the limits between the dry land and the springs of water (v.18d). Your insurmountable barriers will be overcome as the "hand" of Yahweh (v.20c) will have created¹⁰⁰ (v.20d) this highway. The "hand" is obviously characteristic of the Man of War,¹⁰¹ but so is the control of the waters and of the water's absence - drought and desert. Muilenburg says that we should understand these realistically rather than allegorically.¹⁰² Indeed, it calls for no supernatural explanation, for, this very process is going on today. Take any class in historical geology or geography. The deserts become fertile ground and sprout trees. Who does this?

Structure analysis, vs. 21-29:¹⁰³

Isaiah 41:21-23	Challenges to the gods (v.23b) to present their arguments for divinity
41:24	Decision about god's divinity
41:25	Yahweh presents evidence (cf. Isa.41:2-3)
41:26ab	Yahweh questions his opponents

¹⁰⁰StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 71, 73.

¹⁰¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 81

¹⁰²Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 459.

¹⁰³Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 82f.

41:26cd	Yahweh declares that they have no answer
41:27	Yahweh presents evidence (cf. Isa.40:9)
41:28-9	decision about god's divinity
:28	Yahweh declares that they have no evidence (cf. Isa.40:12-14)
:29	Judgment (cf. Isa.40:18-20)

Genre: Trial speech.¹⁰⁴

Comments: The trial is resumed after Yahweh's pledge and assurance to his servant, Israel (cf. Isa.41:8-20). Verses 21-22a reassert Yahweh's challenge.¹⁰⁵ The one offering this challenge is the King of Jacob. Tell us the former things (v.22c) or the things to come (v.23a). They are silent (v.24). This King presents his evidence: deeds (v.25) and his words (v.26-7;cf. Isa.40:9).¹⁰⁶ Here Yahweh repeats the evidence that he has previously given in 41:2-3 and 40:9. It is important to translate 40:9 and 41:27b as "a herald of good tidings to" because the herald/servant is described in the following unit. The declaration of v.26cd is repeated in v.28 and the last verse gives a final judgment to the idols. This judgment provides the condemnation of idolatry not found in 40:18-20.

II Isaiah has presented his message in three major concepts: (1) who is this God?, (2) Israel, Yahweh's servant, (3) the immediate world situation, i.e. Cyrus' victories, as it applies to Yahweh and his

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

servant.¹⁰⁷ The preceding analysis, and that to follow, support the contention of Muilenburg that:

...the theology of...Moses is succinctly and classically formulated in the theophanies and I should like now to suggest that this is true a fortiori of the thought of Second Isaiah.¹⁰⁸

We have seen that this theophanic emphasis has Mosaic overtones which have characteristics of the creation↔redemption language of the Creator-King.

Waterman says that if II Isaiah is to hold his audience, he must now clarify and justify the role of the servant in this new exodus.¹⁰⁹

Textual division proposed: 42:1-17 (1-4,5-9,10-3,14-17)

Subdivisions:	Westermann	1-4,5-9,10-3 [42:14-44:23]	14-7
	Muilenburg	[41:1-42:4] 42:1-4 [42:5-17]	5,6-9, 10-13,14-7
	Waterman	[1-16]	1-4,5-8,9,10-13,14-6
	Stuhlmueeller	1-4,5-7,8-9,10-13,14-6	

Textual notes: Important words

v.1a	behold, my servant (הֵן עַבְדִּי)
v.5d	my spirit (רוּחִי)
v.6c	given you as a covenant (וְאַתָּה נָתַתָּ לְבְרִית)
v.9a	behold (הֵנָּה)

¹⁰⁷Waterman, p. 40.

¹⁰⁸Muilenburg, "The Speech of," p. 45.

¹⁰⁹Waterman, p. 40.

- v.9b new things (וחדשות)
- v.9c before they spring (בטרם תצמחנה)
- v.9d you (אתכם)
- v.10a a new song (שיר חדש)
- v.13a like a mighty man (כגבור)
- v.13b Man of War (באיש מלחמות)
- v.13d he shows himself mighty (יתגבר) (Ex.15:3)
- v.14a for a long time (מעולם)
- v.15b I dry up (אוביש)
- all their herbage (וכל עשבם)
- v.15c I turn rivers (ושמתי נהרות)
- islands (לאיים)
- v.15d I dry up (אוביש)
- pools (ואגמים)

Translation problem

- v.10c those who go down to the sea (יורדי הים ומלאר)

Structure analysis, vs.1-4:¹¹⁰

- 42:1abc Designation of the servant
- 42:1d The task of the servant
- 42:2-3b The way the servant is not to serve
- 42:3c The task of the servant
- 42:4a The way the servant is not to serve
- 42:4bc The task of the servant

Genre: A free composition of II Isaiah which resembles the designation of a charismatic leader (cf. Gideon-Judges 6) by utilizing royal

¹¹⁰Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 92f.

language.¹¹¹

Comments: vs.1-4 - We have discussed the views of Muilenburg, Waterman, and Westermann concerning the structural unity of vs. 42:1-4 in Chapter 4. Waterman suggests that here II Isaiah describes the universal calling, functions, and assured future of the servant, Israel, from Yahweh's standpoint.¹¹² Remembering 40:9 and 41:27, Yahweh needs a herald. With Israel's acquittal in 41:8f. and as a result of the decision in 41:29, Yahweh has such a servant. It seems that this is a further presentation about the nature of Yahweh. He needs servants or messengers. So, immediately after¹¹³ the judgment against the nations (v.29), Yahweh addresses his servant, Israel, who is in the court. The possible reaction from the coastlands is delayed (v.10d) until a description of their "need" has been given (v.4c). This King (cf. Isa. 41:21) addresses Israel (v.42:1) in the form of a "designation." It is a designation used mainly in the days of the pre-dynasty charismatic transmissions of leadership.¹¹⁴ Verse 1c says that Yahweh puts "his" spirit on the chosen servant. This suggests that this description of the servant has affinities with the designation of David (I Samuel 16) rather than Saul.¹¹⁵ But verse 5e suggests that this same God gives

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 93-4.

¹¹²Waterman, p. 30, 41.

¹¹³Before Yahweh addresses Israel in v.8, v.4 is followed by the Coastland's reactions.

¹¹⁴Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 93. Cf. also Judges 6, I Samuel 9:15-17.

¹¹⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 94.

breath or "spirit" (רוּחַ) to all the people who walk in the earth.¹¹⁶

The servant's task or function has to do with justice (vs.1d,3c,4b).

It is described by what the servant is "not" to do (vs.2-3b,4a). This unit is a reminder of a royal designation where some kind of messenger or official has some duty "...by way of action, like the judges (charismatic leaders) and kings in the past."¹¹⁷

Structure analysis, vs. 5-9:

42:5 Introduction

:5a Messenger formula

:5bcde Epithets to Yahweh

42:6-7 The commissioning of the Servant

:6ab The call

:6c-7 The task of the servant

42:8-9 Decision (cf. Isa.41:4,29)

Genre: A commissioning of the servant with judicial decision.¹¹⁹

Comments: A call or commissioning follow the designation. It opens with the introductory messenger-formula (v.5a) and reminds the hearers and readers of the context of this "call" and of who has just been speaking (v.5b-d). Two self-predications (vs.6,8) follow. The first self-predication is expanded in v.6ab by the same two verbs "call" (קָרָא) and "take by the hand" (לָחֹזֵק בְּיָדָךְ) which precede the previous reference to Israel in 41:9,¹²⁰ "You are my servant." In the

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 97.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 98.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 98-101.

¹²⁰Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 468; Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 99.

designation, these verbs are expanded to explain further the function of the servant (cf.v.2-4). The servant has now been commissioned as "a covenant of the people" (cf.v.4c-"law"), as "a light," "to open" the eyes of the blind and "to bring out" the prisoners. Westermann says that this does not simply repeat the earlier "election of Israel," but "...a fresh charge is laid upon her."¹²¹ Many scholars have pointed to the fact that the subject of the infinitives in v. 7 could either be Yahweh or the servant.¹²² To leave the subject open to either could suggest both. The second self-predication (v.8) reminds Israel that the servant just commissioned knows the name of the one who is calling (cf.Ex.15:3). This is the God of the Mosaic covenant who is not (v.8bc) to be compared to "graven images" (cf.Ex.20:3-6). Westermann feels that vs. 5-9 are a later expansion of vs. 1-4 and that v. 9 is out of place here,¹²³ but v. 9 reminds the servant of the evidence (Cyrus) that Yahweh has given¹²⁴ and announces additional, new "doings." Structure analysis, vs. 10-13:¹²⁵

42:10-12	Introduction
:10	Imperative summons to sing
:11-12	Jussives designating singers
42:13	Motivation: Yahweh's present activity as Creator-King

¹²¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 100.

¹²²Ibid., Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 469.

¹²³Ibid., p. 10.

¹²⁴Waterman, p. 41.

¹²⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 102f. Stuhlmuehler, Creative Redemption, p. 267.

Genre: Eschatological hymn of praise.¹²⁶

Comments: vs.10-13 - But, before Yahweh can announce the release (cf.v.7bc - remember the "open" infinitives) and creative↔redemptive return, a psalm of praise interrupts and sets the context for the announcement. The words and style are those of an "eschatological hymn of praise"¹²⁷ and the psalm reminds Muilenburg of an enthronement hymn.¹²⁸ Those summoned to sing are the servants who have just been called,¹²⁹ so that they might share in this vision.¹³⁰ Here not only the human servants, Israel, but the whole earth is summoned to sing: from the sea and its coastlands (cf.v.4c) to the most remote villages of Kedar and Sela and all the inhabitants of the earth. If we are to be realistic, here, we must say that in some way the psalm invites non-human subjects to respond to God's past action and announcement of the new. At least, a response is called for. As 40:9-11 ends the prolog on a hymnic refrain, so this hymn ends the first major section of II Isaiah.¹³¹

The description of "Yahweh's advent, his coming from afar" as the "mighty man" (v.13a) or "man of war" (v.13b) is like that of Ex.15: 1-18 or other songs of the wars of Yahweh.¹³² The meaning of this

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 102.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 470.

¹²⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 103.

¹³⁰Waterman, p. 41.

¹³¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 28, 101f.

¹³²Ibid., p. 104.

psalm to all those who sang it was that "...God is intervening now...."¹³³ As we have claimed, the "man of war" is a description of the Creator-King (cf.Ex.15:3; Anat:III:11). This is confirmed by the control of the waters language which follows. Muilenburg feels that this psalm is called for, like Ex.15:1-18, in the hour of the new Exodus.¹³⁴ He would want to emend יִרְדּוּ in verse 10c because of parallelism, to יִרְדּוּ . It may make better parallelism, but "who go down to the sea" is not out of keeping with Israel's international perspective (cf.Ex.15:13-15). This is a call summoning all the inhabitants of the extremes of the earth - those who live by the sea and in it, and those who live away from the sea - in the desert and on mountain tops - to respond to Yahweh's activity. There is no real evidence to support emending this verse.

Structure analysis, vs. 14-17:¹³⁵

42:14ab	Allusion to a lament
42:14c-16	Proclamation of salvation
:14cd	Change in Yahweh's attitude
:15-16	Yahweh's activity because of his new attitude
42:17	The consequence of the proclamation

Genre: Proclamation of salvation.¹³⁶

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 471

¹³⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 106.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 105f. Schoors, I Am God, p. 85, 90f.

vs.14-17 - Waterman gives the best account of "...the complete shift in thought from the preceding lofty elations to the humble apologetic defense which follows..." II Isaiah's listeners were not so enthusiastic in their response to the hymn of praise. "Why had Yahweh been absent so long?" was their complaint. The unit is a proclamation of salvation which opens with an allusion to a community lament (v.14ab).¹³⁷ Here Yahweh admits that the charge made in the lament is true. But now Yahweh announces that he cries out like a woman in labor, so changed is his attitude (v.14cd). This is the fourth objection given by the servants.¹³⁸ As in 41:17-19, Muilenburg calls the language which follows eschatological. But both passages are examples of the power or effects that the Creator-King has and will have for his servants. Included here are a description of the control of the limits between the forms of water and its absence (v.15) and the changing of darkness into light (v.16d). Verse 16gh ends with a theophanic assurance. Waterman would delete the verse 17, but it makes a fitting closing¹³⁹ which reminds the servants of idolatry (cf. Isa. 41:11).

Textual division proposal: 42:18-25

Subdivisions:	Westermann	[42:14-44:23]	18-25
	Muilenburg	[42:18-43:7]	18-25
	Waterman		18-25

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 105.

¹³⁸Waterman, p. 42.

¹³⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 106-7.

StuhlmueLLer 18-25

Textual notes: Important words

v.18a, 19b deaf (החרשים, חרש)

v.18b, 19acd blind (והעורים, עורר)

v.19a servant (עבדי)

v.19b messenger (כמלאכי)

Structure analysis, vs.18-25¹⁴⁰

42:18 Introduction by imperatives

42:19 Disputation questions about present Israel

42:20-1 The charge against Israel

:20 What Israel did

:21 What Yahweh did

42:22 The present consequences of the charge

42:23-24b Disputation questions about past Israel

42:24cde The charge against Israel

42:25 The past consequences of the charge

Genre: An imitation of a disputation.¹⁴¹

Comments: Waterman ways: "The prophet's explanation...fails to satisfy the exiles' previous query and they are inclined to turn a deaf ear (emphasis mine)."¹⁴² Not only is their ear deaf, but also they are blind to the truth of the evidence that Yahweh has given. Westermann

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 109f. Roy Melugin, The Formation of Isaiah 40-55 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), p. 41f. Schoors, I Am God, p. 201f.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Waterman, p. 42.

suggests that the same charge is being answered in this disputation as the one underlying 40:27: "God has abandoned us and our right has been violated. Where has God been so long?" Westermann says the unit is actually the "...reversal of the charge brought by Israel,"¹⁴³ (cf.v. 42:14). Because the servant fails to appreciate Yahweh's admission of his silence and announcement of return, Israel is reminded of their previous failure to obey Yahweh's "torah" (v.24de) and the consequent destruction (vs.24abc,25). It is to this "trapped" multitude that Yahweh has returned (v.13) and now says, "Restore" (v.22). In this disputation, Yahweh uses the lament to turn the tables on his accusers and ask, "Who is the blind one here?"¹⁴⁴ The servant is equated with a messenger (b.19b) who failed to "understand" or "take to heart"¹⁴⁵ the message with which he was entrusted (vs.18-20) or the punishment which he received (vs.22,25).

Textual division proposed: 42:1-13 (1-7,8-13)

Subdivision: Westermann [42:14-44:23] 1-7,8-15

Muilenburg [42:18-43:7] 1-7 43:8-13

Waterman 1-13 [3b-7=gloss]

Stuhlmueeller 1-7,8-13

Textual notes: Important words

v.2a waters (במים)

v.2b rivers (בנהרות)

¹⁴³Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 109.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁴⁵Cf. Jeremiah 32:40.

- v.8a blind (עור)
- v.8b and deaf (וחרשים)
- v.10a my witnesses (עדיו)
- v.10b my servant (ועבדיו)
- v.11b beside me there is no Savior (ואין מבלעדי)
- v.12c my witnesses (עדיו)

Structure analysis, vs. 43:1-7:¹⁴⁶

- 43:1abc Introduction
 - :1a Messenger formula
 - :1bc Epithets to Yahweh
- 43:1d Assurance of salvation
- 43:1de Substantiation
 - :1de Verbal clauses
 - :1e Noun clause
- 43:2 Results
- 43:3ab Substantiation: noun clauses
- 43:3c-4 Effects on nations and Israel
- 43:5a Assurance of salvation
- 43:5a Substantiation: noun clause
- 43:5b-6 Results
- 43:7 Goal

Genre: Imitation of an oracle of salvation¹⁴⁷ with mixed and redundant

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 115f. Stuhlmueeller, Creative Redelption, p. 110-5, 285.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

elements.

Comments: The disputation that has just ended (cf. vs.42:18-25) forms a dramatic contrast with the following chapter which seeks to describe the new events¹⁴⁸ that Yahweh announced in vs. 42:14-16. First, Yahweh turns to those blind and deaf servants and proclaims an oracle of salvation (vs.43:1-7).¹⁴⁹ Then, the trial scene is resumed as Israel becomes witnesses for Yahweh (v.43:10).¹⁵⁰

vs.1-7 - Yahweh abruptly changes the scene from the review of the Israel's past to the present, "But now!" The introductory formula is expanded with two participles describing the creation of Jacob-Israel (v.1abc). Next, the theophanic assurance "Fear not!" is spoken followed by the reasons (v.1de) given in the perfect tense. A decisive change on their behalf has already taken place.¹⁵¹ Verse two illustrates the Creator-King language of creation↔redemption. This is a proclamation of the results. The emphatic particle ׀ introduces vs. 2a,c,3a. Here, as in vs. 41:18-19 and v. 42:15, Yahweh's power is described by his ability to control the limits of the waters and also of fire (v.2cd). This is again relational power like that of the Creator-King who controls the waters and the heat of the desert, i.e. the waters and the water's absence. These lines may be reference to the first Exodus because the passage from Exodus 3:12 is repeated, "I will

¹⁴⁸Waterman, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 115.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 115. Waterman, p. 43.

be with you," (cf. v.41:10) and because the word "waters (מים) is reminiscent of the "waters" (מים) which did not allow the Pharaoh's troops safe passage in Ex.15:8. In the Ugaritic texts (cf. text 68), Prince ym and Judge nhr are often used in parallel lines as they are in v.2ab.

Both Westermann and Muilenburg rightly see that vs.3c-4 contain a historical emphasis concerning the immediate world situation.¹⁵² The theme of Yahweh as the go'el kinsman redeeming¹⁵³ or re-creating¹⁵⁴ Israel dominates these passages. This is followed in verse 5a by another theophanic cry "Fear not!" which divides vs. 1-7 into two units of parallel construction.¹⁵⁵ The emphasis here (כִּי) falls on the theme from Ex.3:12, "I am with you." Westermann says that in vs. 5-7 "...the activity of the Creator and that of the lord of history are here set together...."¹⁵⁶ The final verse (v.7bc) repeats the creation verbs which expanded the introduction. This is an example of "ring structure" (a rhetorical device which Muilenburg has described) in which the final line repeats the first.¹⁵⁷ Muilenburg sees the emphasis of this unit as predominantly redemption.¹⁵⁸ However, here both

¹⁵²Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 118. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 482-3.

¹⁵³Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 483.

¹⁵⁴Stuhlmüller, Creative Redemption, p. 114.

¹⁵⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 115, 118-19. Cf. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 482-5.

¹⁵⁶Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 119.

¹⁵⁷James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXVIII (1969), p. 9.

¹⁵⁸Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 480.

creation and redemption appear as "...the two focuses of the prophet's eschatology."¹⁵⁹ StuhlmueLLer says that when the introduction is a hymnic expansion, as in v.1, the participles announce what Yahweh is doing "at this moment...as though he is already accomplishing what he promises to do."¹⁶⁰ He does not see that the theme of creation enters into the reasons for encouragement (vs.3a,5a), but would agree with Muilenburg¹⁶¹ that the "creation" verbs in vs. 1 and 7 summarize the redemptive acts here proclaimed.¹⁶²

But the facts that vs. 1-7 are "ringed" by creation verbs and that creation↔redemption language of the Creator-King appears in v.2 seems to speak not just for a redemption emphasis nor for a unity of creation and redemption only in vs.5-7 nor for a creative redemption emphasis,¹⁶³ but for the creation↔redemption activity of the Creator-King in the contemporary situation of II Isaiah, "Fear not, I am with you" (v.5a).

Watermann deletes vs.3b-7 as a gloss based on a misunderstanding of 45:14. He sees these verses as an example of the extreme nationalism of Trito-Isaiah.¹⁶⁴ Although he also deletes 42:17, Waterman does not do the same with 41:11. I would agree that they are

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 114.

¹⁶¹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 485.

¹⁶²StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 114.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Waterman, p. 143-4.

nationalistic, but I would say that this was part of the message of II Isaiah. These passages fit with the condemnation of idolatry appropriate to II Isaiah's Babylonian situation (cf. Isa.43:14).

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Structure analysis, vs. 8-13:

- 43:8-9b Summons to trial
- 43:9cd Questions to opponents
- 43:9ef Challenge to opponents
- 44:10 Witnesses summoned
- 44:11 Decision of/for witnesses
- 44:12 Evidence for questions to opponents
- 44:13 Decision on questions to opponents

Genre: Trial speech against the nations.¹⁶⁶

Vs. 8-13 - After the preceding oracle, Yahweh senses that there still lingers in his servant(s) the feeling that the gods may have something to do with their fate¹⁶⁷ or that Yahweh has been "absent" so long that they doubt his power to really act now (cf. vs. 10-13). How shall he convince these who are still blind and deaf (v. 8)? One way would be to "...get them to make better use of the knowledge they already have."¹⁶⁸ So, again, the scene resumes in the focus of the court of nations. But now, in contrast to the disputation in 42:18-25 wherein

¹⁶⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 120f. Melugin, The Formation of, p. 110-112.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Waterman, p. 43.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

Israel was reminded of her past failure to keep the Torah (v.24e), here Israel is called as a witness (v.10) before the nations to testify to Yahweh's claim to divinity (cf. Isa.41:1-4).¹⁶⁹ Westermann correctly emphasizes the "historical" sense of verses 9f.¹⁷⁰ The present hour of their situation requires a decision on the claim to divinity. Israel is called to testify about the actual experience of her history which both sides must accept.¹⁷¹ That is, Israel is called on the stand before the nations to testify that Yahweh is "the" God because of their past experience with him as a people (cf. Isa.42:18-25). In this way, they testify to the possibility of Yahweh's acting now (Cyrus) and in the return (cf. Isa.42:14-16). Even the nations are called to present their witnesses, but they are silent (v.9). Thus, if Israel could testify that Yahweh along knew the future and brought it to pass,¹⁷² then she knew that no gods precede or follow Yahweh (v.10ef) and that "beside him there is no (׀'לל) Savior" (v.11b). This assertion for the witnesses, preceded by a doubly emphasized self-predication (v.11a), reminds me of the Ugaritic Text 51:IV:44 wherein Baal is proclaimed King, "Our King is Aliyn Baal, Yea our judge and there is no one (in) who is above him."¹⁷³ This is a claim of Kingship, of divinity. But Baal was not described as "Savior." Muilenburg points out

¹⁶⁹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 120.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 121. Cf. Stuhlmueller, Creative Redemption, p.46.

¹⁷¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 22.

¹⁷²Waterman, p. 44.

¹⁷³Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament," Vetus Testamentum, XV (1965), 317.

that Savior is connected to the Holy One of Israel (v.43:3a). In v.12 Yahweh reminds his witnesses of their past experience of him among them and in v.13 of his absolute divinity. Why can't they trust him now?¹⁷⁴ Thus, the court drama ends with Yahweh's own decision, as Judge, as to the claim to divinity (v.13).

Textual division proposed: 43:14-28 (14-5,16-21,22-28)

Subdivisions: Westermann [42:14-44:23] 8-15,16-21,22-8
 Muilenburg [43:14-44:5] 14-15,16-7,18-9,20-1,
 22-4,25-8
 Waterman 14-28 14,15-7,18-19a,19b-21,22-4,25,
 26-8
 Stuhlmueeller 14-5,16-21

Textual notes: Important words

v.15b your King (מלככם)
 v.16b a way (דרך)
 sea (בים)
 v.16c a path (נתיבה)
 mighty waters (ובמים עזים)
 v.19a Behold (הנני)
 v.19c a way (דרך)
 in the wilderness (במדבר)
 v.19d rivers (נהרות)
 in the desert (בישמוך)

¹⁷⁴Waterman, p. 44.

- v.20c כִּי I give waters (נָתַתִּי מַיִם)
 in the wilderness (בַּמִּדְבָּר)
- v.20d rivers (נְהָרוֹת)
 in the desert (בִּישִׁימֹן)
- v.20e I give drink (לְהַשְׁקִיט)
 chosen (בַּחֲרִירִי)

Structure analysis, vs. 14-15:¹⁷⁵

- 43:14ab Introduction
- :14a Messenger formula
- :14b Epithets for Yahweh
- 43:14cde Results: Yahweh's activity
- 43:15 Substantiation: noun clauses

Genre: This is not a definite genre.¹⁷⁶ Verses 14-5 are composed of elements of an oracle of salvation in mixed order.

Comments: vs.14-15 - Both Waterman and Muilenburg break a unit with verse 13, but Westermann feels that these verses belong to the trial speech.¹⁷⁷ But whether these verses announce the effects of the decision in v.11-13 or whether they begin a new unit with a double pronouncement (v.11a) to emphasize the proclamation being made, they proclaim the downfall of Babylon.¹⁷⁸ This is, again, a claim of an

¹⁷⁵Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 125. Melugin, The Formation of, p. 110-112.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

"historical" nature, the contemporary situation. Westermann reminds us that "The Creator, The Holy One and Israel's King" are predications of Israel's past encounter and experience with Yahweh.¹⁷⁹ The fact that the final emphasis falls on a combination of predications in apposition and parallel which culminate in "king" would support the Creator-King claim. Muilenburg sees this same historical emphasis when he says:

The words, your King, continue a major motif of the poems (40:106; 41:21, 43:15) and focus the thought upon Israel's need in the contemporary world situation.¹⁸⁰

Here he sees the themes of redemption, creation, and sovereignty as the emphases.¹⁸¹

Structure analysis, vs. 16-21:¹⁸²

- 43:16a Introduction: Messenger formula
- 43:16b-18 Reference to community lament
- 43:19ab Change in Yahweh's attitude
- 43:19c-20 Yahweh's activity
- 43:21 The consequences of the activity

Genre: Proclamation of salvation.¹⁸³

vs. 16-21 - Another proclamation of salvation follows. But such a proclamation should begin with a reference to a community lament.¹⁸⁴

Can vs.16-17 be taken as a lament? Westermann says that such a lament

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 125-6.

¹⁸⁰Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 493.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 127f. Schoors, I Am God, p. 85, 93f.

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 126-7.

is a form of "...the review of God's former acts of salvation..." and does appear in community laments and also in Isaiah 63:11-14.¹⁸⁵ If this is true, the prophet is saying not to remember the former things in the context of a complaint. Stop clinging to the past!¹⁸⁶ Forget them (v.18) for "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (v.19a). Muilenburg and Westermann both see verse 19ab as the focal theme¹⁸⁷ and both understand vs.16-17 as referring to a redemptive exodus event.¹⁸⁸ But Muilenburg compares the verses' hymnic character to Ex.15:21¹⁸⁹ and Westermann says that in these two verses "...the activity of the creator and the lord of history coalesce."¹⁹⁰ What if 43:16bc were read according to the Creator-King paradigm of the Fisher hypothesis?

...who makes a way in Yam (יָם)

A path in the mighty waters (בְּמַיִם) (Ex.15:10b)

The "mighty waters" (בְּמַיִם אֲדִירִים) appear in Exodus 15:10 as another name for the Sea. In 43:2 "waters" appeared in parallel construction with nhr, river. Here, clearly, "waters" is employed as being synonymous with the Sea, ym. Although in 16b יָם has the article and in 16c "waters" does not, one might argue on the basis of parallelism that

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 127-8; also Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 494.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 27, Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 494.

¹⁸⁹ Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 494.

¹⁹⁰ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 127.

the Masoretic Text pointed the word incorrectly and that it should be read as a proper name, "Yam," as it is in Isa. 51:10. Therefore, these verses do not only lament former acts of redemption, but former "acts" of the Creator-King who as Man of War created and redeemed a people. This is creation↔redemption language.

Westermann feels that the lament reproaches God "...with the contrast between his present attitude...and the great thing he did for them in former days."¹⁹¹ Since v.19 is the central focus in the proclamation, it describes the present creating↔redeeming activity of the Creator-King. In remaining verses which describe Yahweh's "intervention"¹⁹² the creation↔redemption language of the control of the waters appears in vs.19cd,20cde. Yahweh "will make rivers in the desert" and "water in the wilderness." He "will give water in the wilderness" and "drink" to his "chosen." Westermann says II Isaiah places the "deliverance" in these verses "...within the wider setting of God's activity in creation...."¹⁹³ The final verse projects the end in view on beyond this description of the return journey (v.19c-20) to the future service of his servants (v.21c, also cf. Isa.42:1-4).

StuhlmueLLer adds an interesting perspective to the emphasis of this genre. He feels that it draws attention to the present moment of a new creative redemption, not only in vs. 19-21, but also through the contrast in vs. 16-17!¹⁹⁴ The effect of this is the feeling that God

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁹²Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁹⁴StuhlmueLLer, Creative Redemption, p. 68.

is now among his people.¹⁹⁵ He sees that the conclusion summarizes this new event as "creation."¹⁹⁶ If our hypothesis is correct, this creation emphasis would also appear in v.16-17 and the whole force of the genre would be the present creating↔redeeming activity of Yahweh for Israel in that contemporary world situation.

Structure analysis, vs. 22-28:¹⁹⁷

- 43:22-25 Disputation: appeal to trial speech
- :22-24b Accusation: Assertion of innocence with evidence
- :24cs Counter-accusation
- :25 Decision: proclamation of forgiveness
- 43:26-28 Trial speech
- :26 Challenge to Israel for a court summons
- :27-8 Accusation and evidence

Genre: Imitation of a trial speech¹⁹⁸ with elements in mixed order and disputation style.

vs.22-28 - The scene now focuses again on the court procedure. The whole unit has the force of a trial speech. The speech proper begins at v.26 and is preceded by a disputation (vs.22-5). In both the disputation and the trial speech, Yahweh opposes his chosen people. In

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁹⁷Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 130-33. Melugin, The Formation of, p. 48f. Schoors, I Am God, p. 190f.

¹⁹⁸Melugin, The Formation of, p. 48-50. Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 130-33.

verses 22-5 II Isaiah "...here endorses unreservedly the charge brought by Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah."¹⁹⁹ Westermann says that Yahweh here charges that "...in the monarchial period the road which Israel took was a mistaken one."²⁰⁰ II Isaiah makes a powerful charge, "...you did not really serve me. In actual fact you made me into a servant."²⁰¹ His people took his lordship and divinity away and Yahweh became servant. After such a charge one would expect a judgment against Israel, but v.25 proclaims a twice self-predicated assurance of salvation. So that after an argument rejecting the totality of Israel's previous service, Yahweh, the Judge, renders a verdict of forgiveness for "his sake," (cf. 21c).

In the trial speech proper, Yahweh challenges Israel to summon him into court. However, Israel does not do this.²⁰² The issue here is the charge brought against God by Israel that is given in v.28.²⁰³ Yahweh answers this charge by pointing, again (cf.vs.23-4) to the whole past history of Israel and then pronouncing the judgment, which was their charge, against them.

Textual division proposed: 44:1-23 (1-5,6-8,9-20,21-2,23)

Subdivisions: Westermann [42:14-44:23] 1-5,6-8,(9-20),21-3

¹⁹⁹ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 131; cf. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 498.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 131

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 130.

Muilenburg [43:14-44:5] 1-5,6-8,(9-20),21-3

Waterman 1-23

StuhlmueLLer 1-5,6-8,23

Textual notes: Important words

v.2d Jeshurun (וִישׁוּרוֹן)

v.3a I pour water (אֶצֶק מִים)

thirsty (land) (צָמָא)

v.3b streams (וְנָזְלִים)

dry ground (יִבְשָׁה)

v.3c my spirit (רוּחִי)

descendants (זֶרַעַךְ)

v.3d blessings (וּבִרְכָּתִי)

offspring (צֶאֱצָאִיךְ)

v.4a spring up (וַצִּמְחוּ)

v.4b willows (כַּעֲרָבִים)

flowing streams (יִבְלֵי מִים)

v.6a King of Israel (מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

v.8c Rock (צוּר)

Translation problem

v.4a from between/in among grass (בִּבְיֶן)

Structure analysis, vs. 44:1-5:²⁰⁴

44:1 Address

44:2ab Introduction

:2a Messenger formula

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 134f.

- :2ab Appositions to Yahweh
- 44:2cd Assurance of salvation
- 44:3-4 Results
- 44:5 Goal

Genre: An oracle of salvation without any substantiation.²⁰⁵

Comments: vs.1-5 - This is an oracle of salvation which continues the forgiveness proclaimed in 43:25. The central focus of the oracle is the Mosaic cry of assurance of salvation, "Fear not," in v.2c.²⁰⁶ The whole emphasis of judgment in v.28 is reversed by the "But, now" which introduces the oracle (cf.43:1). The introductory formula of v.2a is expanded in the hymnic style of 43:16-17 by two participles "The one making you and the one forming you."²⁰⁷ Muilenburg and Westermann both emphasize that Israel's election in these verses is closely connected in her history to creation.²⁰⁸ Also both commentators point to Jeshurun used here as a poetic name for Israel (cf.Deut.32:15;33:5,26).²⁰⁹ Jeshurun had rejected the Rock of Salvation (Deut.32:15), but soon "the Lord became King in Jeshurun" (Deut.33:5). These two themes of King and Rock appear in the following unit. But the analogy made is to a group who had rejected Yahweh's kingship only to accept that kingship soon afterward.

²⁰⁵Ibid.

²⁰⁶Ibid., p. 134.

²⁰⁷Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 501.

²⁰⁸Ibid. Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 135.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 502. Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 135.

The Creator-King language in vs. 3-4 supports the claim of, not only close connection between creation and redemption, but of creation↔redemption. After the oracle of assurance in v.3a, there follows substantiations in the future tense. "I will pour water on thirsty ground and streams on the dry ground." This is introduced by the emphatic particle 'ו. What follows is an expansion of Yahweh's "control of the limits" as applied to the relationship with future Israel (v.3cd). Israel's descendants will "spring up in among grass, like willows by flowing streams" (v.4). Whether v.4 reads with the variants - "like grass amid waters" - or "in among grass," Israel's descendants are here being directly compared to natural entities - "willows," "grass." Statements like this one in II Isaiah seem to indicate that both human beings and other subjects of the "natural" world share the same status of "subjectivity." Muilenburg calls this kind of language in vs.3-4 "exchatological" (cf. also 42:15-16). But, if the Creator-King paradigm is taken seriously, it is eschatological in the sense that such control of the limits of the waters and the life connected to it are examples of the relational power of the Creator-King.

The oracle ends with a reference to these descendants as being anyone who will say, "I am the Lord's" (v.5a). Muilenburg says that this is perfectly consistent with II Isaiah's "missionary" emphasis to the nations.²¹⁰ Thus, the end that this oracle has in sight is not the immediate hearers but all future descendants.²¹¹

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 504-5.

²¹¹Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p, 134.

Structure analysis, vs. 6-8:²¹²

- 44:6 Introduction
 - :6a Messenger formula
 - :6ab Epithets for Yahweh
 - :6cd Claim to divinity
- 44:7 Summons to trial in disputation style
 - :7a Disputation question
 - :7ab Summons to trial
 - :7c Disputation question
 - :7d Challenge to opponents
- 44:8a Assurance of salvation
- 44:8b Disputation question
- 44:8c Evidence for disputation question
- 44:8d Disputation question
- 44:8e Evidence for disputation question

Structure analysis, vs. 21-22:

- 44:21-2 Judgment in oracle of salvation language
 - :21ab Exhortation
 - :21cd-22b Substantiations
- 44:22c Exhortation

Genre: Trial speech with mixed elements and characteristics of a disputation and oracle of salvation.²¹³

²¹²Ibid., p. 138-44. Melugin, The Formation of, p. 118-22. Schoors, I Am God., p. 228f.

²¹³Ibid.

vs.6-8, 21-22 - These verses appear to be a combination of a trial speech and an oracle of salvation.²¹⁴ Verse 6 gives the opening of an oracle of salvation and Muilenburg says that the emphasis falls on "The King of Israel."²¹⁵ We have seen that the phrase "beside me there is no god" indicates Kingship (cf. Isa.43:8-13) through a theme of the Creator-King as it was adapted from the Baal cosmogony. However, Westermann explains II Isaiah's use of "King of Israel" as having been taken over "...without attaching any particular significance to the designation."²¹⁶ Even for Muilenburg, it does not dominate over the thought of redemption.²¹⁷ But, through the Creator-King model, we can claim that Kingship here means the Creator-King, Yahweh, the Man of War.

Verse 7 introduces a summons to trial in which Yahweh confronts the nations and their gods. In support of his claim to divinity he again calls Israel to be his witnesses (v.8c). This is only done after the theophanic assurance "Fear Not" has been proclaimed in v.8a. But verses 7 and 8 refer to Israel's past experience with Yahweh.

vs.21-22 - These verses are an assurance of salvation, Israel is called to remember only certain things. Israel is God's servant; she was formed by him and will not be forgotten. Westermann says that what is to be remembered is that there is no God or Rock besides Yahweh.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 138.

²¹⁵ Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 506.

²¹⁶ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 140.

²¹⁷ Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 506.

²¹⁸ Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 142.

Muilenburg sees that the theme of witnesses "...receives its full scope and play."²¹⁹ The creation↔redemption language of the control of the water cycle is again evident as Yahweh, "sweeps away transgressions like a cloud," and "sins like a mist."

vs. 9-20 - The authenticity of these verses is much in debate. Muilenburg and Westermann both feel that it does not belong in this context.²²⁰ Other passages in II Isaiah like 41:5-7 have a similar theme and emphasis. Muilenburg notes that much of the language and imagery is characteristic of II Isaiah, but there are discrepancies of style.²²¹ Whether this taunt song²²² is original or not, it carries the Creator-King water imagery in vs. 12 and 14. The idol maker receives no strength from the water and is faint. He plants trees and the rains (Yahweh) nourishes it. Yahweh controls the water cycle which provides the idol makers with wood for fuel (fire) and for idols. This could have been a deliberate contrast to the assurance of verse 8. Considering II Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, and the fact that Jeremiah used such language, it could have been original.

Structure analysis, vs. 23:²²³

44:23a-d Introduction: imperatives

44:23ef Motivation

Genre: Eschatological hymn of praise.²²⁴

²¹⁹Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 509.

²²⁰Ibid., p. 505; Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 146-7.

²²¹Ibid., p. 505.

²²²Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, p. 146.

²²³Ibid., p.142-4. Stuhlmuehler, Creative Redemption, p. 267.

²²⁴Ibid.

vs. 23 - After the assurance of forgiveness in v.22, the prophet calls for all creation to participate in a psalm praising Yahweh. Here, at the end of the trial scene, those in the court are reminded of their context (cf. Isa.40:12-24): the heavens and the depths of the earth. The mountains and forests are also invited to join the singing (v.23cd). Both Muilenburg and Westermann call this a hymn of praise which closes the section.²²⁵ A similar hymn followed Yahweh's proclamation of announcement in 42:10-13. Westermann says that all the created universe is called to make a response to Yahweh's activity. Then he says, "Here God's act of deliverance and salvation and the activity of the creator are regarded as identical."²²⁶ As we have tried to show, the God being praised is the Creator-King, Yahweh, the Man of War.

Watermann concludes that since the beginning of Chapter 42, the prophet has dealt with the servant Israel, his past, present, and future, his new relation to Yahweh and his mission and calling to all the nations.²²⁷ This included God's forgiveness, in spite of Israel's objections and the new steps that He is taking to bring this creation ↔ redemption about.

Conclusion

In the exegesis, we noted that Isaiah 40-44:23 is divided into major sections which end with a hymn of praise. The first major

²²⁵Ibid., p. 142-3; Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," p. 510.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 144.

²²⁷Waterman, p. 46.

section concludes with a trial speech in which the decision condemns the gods of the nations as empty idols and is followed by further effects - the designation and commissioning of Yahweh's servant (Isa.41:21-42:9). A hymn of praise in 42:10-13 invites the whole earth to respond in song to Yahweh's decision and its effects. However, the audience has not been persuaded by the preceding trial scene and has not accepted the call. The next section alternates between a proclamation of salvation or an oracle of salvation and a trial speech or disputation. In the first disputation Yahweh charges that Israel, not Yahweh, is blind and deaf (Isa.42:18-25). In the next trial speech against the nations, the blind and deaf become witnesses for Yahweh (Isa.43:8-13). The following disputation or trial speech (Isa.43:22-8) charges that Israel made Yahweh a servant. But, instead of a decision against Israel, Yahweh's judgment is complete forgiveness of Israel's sins (v.25). The final trial speech contains disputation questions concerning Yahweh's divinity and reminds the servants that Yahweh has forgiven them (Isa.44:6-8,21-22). Another hymn of praise invites the whole of the heavens and the earth to join in psalmic praise.

This alternation between these trial speeches or disputations and the salvation oracles or proclamations of salvation, which appear in between, have the effect of persuading the servant, Israel, to accept the designation and commissioning of Yahweh. In the first section the gods were condemned and the servant was called. In the second section, the servant is condemned as being blind and deaf and as having made Yahweh serve. However, the servant is completely forgiven and the oracles and proclamations have the effect of assurances and promises

that Yahweh makes to Israel.

Throughout the preceding exegesis, the responses of Yahweh to his people's actual objections is very important. The recognition that Yahweh is affected by and responds to the world and that Yahweh needs and must "call" servants who themselves must respond to the call means that the relationship between Yahweh and his servants in the world is reciprocal. Yahweh does not have absolute control over his servants' responses. Yahweh and his servant, Israel, are mutually related. Each depends on the other. In the exegesis, we have pointed out the many places where the Mosaic covenantal language of theophany illustrates this relational power of the Creator-King.

Through the Creator-King theological model, the exegesis has also shown that nature and history are not two separate realms under the control of Yahweh. The control of the limits of the water cycle language shows the continuity between nature and history. In II Isaiah's theology, nature and history are not bifurcated. Like Yahweh's Kingship over the sea, the earth and the heavens, nature and history form an interconnected whole.

The close relationship between creation and redemption that Muilenburg, Westermann and StuhlmueUer have described has been altered by the Creator-King theology. In the exegesis of passages like Isaiah 43:1-7 and 43:16-21, we have emphasized the creation↔redemption power of the Creator-King. This mutual interrelatedness of creation and redemption is described as occurring in the present activity of Yahweh. Thus, creation and redemption are not two, temporally separate acts. The control of the limits of the water cycle in these and other passages

has allowed the creation↔redemption power of the Creator-King to be fully recognized.

The conclusions of this exegesis support the position that it is possible to read and interpret Isaiah 40-55 as the expression of the experience of an actual person, through themes and genres that have been known generally and through overlooked themes viewed in a new paradigm. It has been demonstrated that many of these themes do appear in these early chapters. An effort has been made to show on rhetorical critical grounds that some of these themes are found in crucial or emphatic contexts. This is especially true of the creation↔redemption language of the control of the extremes between the forms of water and its absence. Therefore, the results of this study establish the possibility of using Loren Fisher's non-dualistic, creation↔redemption model of the Creator-King for the exegesis of II Isaiah.

Chapter 6

THE ELDERS AND THE "SPIRITUAL LIFE"
OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF RIVERSIDEA. THE BACKGROUND OF THE SITUATION
AND THE PLANNED RELATION OF THE CREATION↔REDEMPTION THESIS

During the summer months of 1976, the elders of the First Christian Church were called to special meetings to deal with a crisis within the church life. Several families who were long-time members of the church had expressed dissatisfaction about the "spiritual life" of the church and had moved their membership to other churches. Other families who remained in the church voiced open objection against some of the church staff. It was a time of turmoil and, since the elders are responsible for the "spiritual life" of the church, we met to hear these objections and to try to deal with the many-sided feelings involved.

The elders displayed a tremendous sense of inclusiveness by giving an ear to all sides of this problem, and by attempting to reach a common decision that would satisfy and be fair to all those involved. During the course of these meetings, it became apparent that some of the dissatisfaction had arisen because of poor communication within the church structure. Other dissatisfaction was the result of personality conflicts and differences or misunderstandings in ideology regarding church program and policy. At this time the elders spoke to those involved, discussed various options for dealing with the problems, and emerged as a unified body who backed the present church staff. The conflict was eased and various proposals

were made for averting this kind of situation from developing in the future.

However, from my perspective, no steps were taken to increase the communication and cooperation within the church structure. The turmoil was quieted, but there were no real changes made in church program toward a renewal of "spiritual life." The elders returned to a bi-monthly meeting and business much as it had been. I approached the elders with a proposal to meet for a period of three hours on two nights when regular elders' meetings were scheduled. This was approved for the meetings in February and April of 1977. Each meeting would begin with a modest meal together, and then follow with the "lesson plan" which would have been distributed to the elders in advance of the meeting.

Because the creation↔redemption thesis and its application in the exegesis of Isaiah 40-44:23 are highly technical and generally removed from the concerns and understanding of the elders, the relationship of the Creator-King thesis to this process would be indirect.

A basic resource for both of these meetings would be a small booklet written by Merrill Cadwell - The Work of the Elders in the Christian Church. It serves as a background description of the general responsibilities and functions of elders in our denomination. In addition, it would serve as a spring-board for discussion about our current church situation. Some of the questions at the end of each chapter have been adapted and focused on the Riverside Christian Church. Five such questions would form the discussion topics for the first meeting.

The first meeting would attempt to bring out the feelings of the elders about the present structural organization and the "spiritual life" of our church. During this meeting the "spiritual life" of the church would not be a major focus of discussion. The focus of this meeting would be on questions relating the current relationships in the structure and our functional use of those relationships in carrying out our responsibilities. In this way, we would become more aware of what we already were doing and of what were the possibilities and limits of that structure.

Thus, the practical application of the Creator-King, creation↔redemption theology, proposed in the first sections of this study, would initially be made in the attempt to seek to stimulate better communication and cooperation among the elders themselves and within the formal organization so that they may more effectively realize their responsibilities in church life. The elders of the First Christian Church of Riverside are responsible for the "spiritual life" of the church as a whole. Therefore, the focus of the first meeting would be on the formal organization of the Riverside Christian Church and on the feelings of the elders about the adequacy of this structural organization for nurturing the "spiritual life" of the church.

For this meeting, the elders would be asked to read and reflect on a selection of scripture from the whole of II Isaiah as background preparation for our discussion of the practical problems confronting us. These scriptures would include all of the "servant songs", so that the concept of servanthood should be a focus of the discussion. I would also attempt to point to the similarity between this concept and the activity and life of Jesus. It was my intention that the discussion of

II Isaiah's inclusive concept of servanthood would aid the elders in attempting to solve the problems facing our church and to develop and nurture "spiritual life." Thus, my objectives for the first meeting would be: (1) To describe the current formal organizational role functions - responsibilities or duties - and role relationships (with the congregation and the pastor) of the elders of the Riverside Christian Church and (2) to explore and express the feelings of the elders present about the adequacy of this structural organization for fostering within our church the communication and cooperation that are necessary for an adequate witness of the Christian faith in our contemporary world. The transcript of this first meeting is found in Appendix C.

Several weeks after the first meeting, I listened to the tape recording of the meeting that I had made and tried to evaluate the results. I decided that we would need to clarify what our common conception of what spiritual life was. Another decision about the plan for the next meeting emerged from a consensus of opinion in the first meeting that some different kind of organization was needed to meet the needs of our church. I also felt that I would need to make some direct connection of the creation↔redemption thesis to the second meeting. Considering this emphasis, the elders would be asked to read and reflect on Isaiah 40-44:23, using the explanation of these chapters by Leroy Waterman as a guide and background preparation for a discussion of our church's "spiritual life" and of the Shepherd Plan. This study and reflection on II Isaiah would provide an indirect influence on the discussion and attempted solutions to the problems we face in the "spiritual life" of our church.

The discussions of II Isaiah in this meeting would be intended to have wider existential relevance to the elders and our situation. By calling attention to the big problem that II Isaiah was having in persuading the exiles to become the new servants of Yahweh in the middle of a time of international chaos and personal bondage, the elders would be asked to relate this situation to what is occurring now in our contemporary world. It was my hope that these discussions of II Isaiah would lift our attention to the wider problems of global crisis that we now face. From this new, more inclusive perspective, we would be able to deal with the strife in our church and focus our concerns on our personal and corporate calling to become relevant servants in our world situation.

This process of reflection of II Isaiah and his message would be carried out on the model of personal value clarification. I would introduce some exegetical interpretation of II Isaiah through the explanation of Leroy Waterman. The elders would be asked to get involved in the scripture by personally reacting to the objections of the exiles and to the problems that II Isaiah had in persuading his audience. The personal responses of the elders would be elicited through such questions as "How did you personally respond to the message of II Isaiah?", "In reading the objections, whose side were you on? Would you be objecting, too, or would you be ready to make the journey back to Jerusalem?", "Are there any similarities between our present world situation and that of II Isaiah and the exiles?" These questions are intended to get the elders beyond the exegetical interpretation to II Isaiah's relevance "for us." They are intended to have hermeneutical significance. At the end of the discussion of II Isaiah,

I would briefly explain my own thesis of the creation↔redemption model of the Creator-King and illustrate this by pointing to some of the scripture in Isaiah 40-44:23 which they would have read. This would also be an indirect influence of my thesis on the later discussion. I would be telling them how the reading and study of II Isaiah had influenced me. It would also have direct influence in that it would confront the elders to examine their own understandings of creation and redemption.

Following this discussion we would discuss the "spiritual life" of our church more directly. We would attempt to arrive at a common definition of what we understand the "spiritual life" of our church to be. We would not discuss objectives which could be used to cultivate this "spiritual life." That could be a topic for further reflection at a later time. But a discussion of the ways that the present structural organization promotes this "spiritual life" would be in order. Another focus of discussion would be on a specific proposal for increasing the communication and cooperation of our whole church family - "The Shepherd Plan." We would discuss the possibility of adapting this plan to our church situation. Alternative plans for fostering church communication, cooperation, and "spiritual life" would also be welcome in this discussion.

Considering these plans, my objectives for the second meeting were to: (1) Elicit the response of the elders present to the message of II Isaiah and to his "opponents" by imagining what it was like to be in the situation of II Isaiah and his "opponents," (2) Clarify our own individual understandings of "spiritual life" and to begin to form some common conception of what the "spiritual life" of our church involves,

and (3) Discuss the present needs of our church, remembering our pastor and our responsibility as elders for "spiritual life", and to discuss the specifics of how we might adapt The Shepherd Plan (or alternatives) to meet these needs. The transcript of the second elders meeting can be found in Appendix C.

The overall objective of these meetings was not to solve all of the practical problems and concerns about "spiritual life" which currently face the elders. The objective was to provide an atmosphere of personal reflection about servanthood ministry and a structure of focused questions about these problems and concerns so that some steps toward solving these issues might be taken. These projected steps might be toward further clarification of and reflection on these issues, but my hope was that some kind of preliminary decisions would be made and some kind of action taken.

B. ELDERS MEETING--FEBRUARY 9, 1977

Implementation of the Plan

In preparation for the first meeting, I made a list of the materials I would need. These included a large pad of paper and easel to write down important comments and conclusions that we might need to look at. On one such piece of paper, I made a diagram of the church's structural organization and put it up on the wall. I provided each elder with paper and pencil to take notes, if they desired. I also had an ample number of Bibles and lesson plans on the table before us. In addition, I considered the setting. I arranged the tables for the meal so that when we ate we were all facing each other. I hoped to encourage

interaction and fellowship. I also made one big table around which we all could sit for the evening's meeting. Prior to the meeting, I had given each elder a copy of the lesson plan and of the resource book - The Work of Elders in the Christian Church.

I also gave some consideration to the implementation of the objectives which were to describe the role function and relationships of the elders and to explore and express the feelings about the adequacy of the structural organization. I did not plan any way to approach the reflection on the scripture. But I did plan on somehow emphasizing or focusing some of the discussion on the question of servanthood. Also, I thought I would try to focus both on the role function of elders and the feelings about the structure by asking the current chairman of the elders and some past chairmen to respond to the second question. My hope was that these techniques might stimulate the discussion from the beginning, so that the discussion might flow the rest of the evening.

When the meeting began, I reviewed from the lesson plan what my objectives for the evening were. I also stated in my own words the development and explanation of the concepts that I had gone through in preparing the questions for discussion. These are also written in the lesson plan. Then I asked if there were any questions about the guidelines for discussion. There were none and so I asked them what responses they had had to the scripture.

Immediately, Ken asked me why I picked out those passages and brought up the subject of the servant songs. I explained why I chose those passages and why I felt the servant songs were important (p. 172). The subject of suffering was then the focus of discussion for quite a while (pp. 172-175). I had hoped to somehow focus the discussion on

II Isaiah's concept of servanthood and this happened at the beginning of the meeting.

When discussion ended on the scriptures, I read aloud the first discussion question and its focus. I then asked Ken Arvin to respond to it as Chairperson of the elders. I had previously asked him if he would do so. After his response I called on the past Chairperson, Roger Moore, and asked him if he wanted to respond to the question. From this point on the responses of the elders came naturally. Most everyone participated in the discussion. During this discussion, I tried to focus on the communication and cooperation necessary, in the current elder role relationships, to be aware of the "spiritual life" of the church. In closing the discussion, I tried to summarize our discussion and point to these relationships within the structure and our responsibility for "spiritual life."

I read aloud question three and its focus. I had earlier asked Homer to think about this question and indicated at this time that I would like him to respond later in the discussion. The elders then shared their feelings about the pastor-elder relationship.

The discussions of these three questions took up the majority of the meeting. We had time to spend only about ten to fifteen minutes each on questions four and six. I chose to omit question five. Homer had brought up the subject of The Shepherd Plan in his response to question three (p. 182). During the discussion of The Shepherd Plan, I tried to elicit the feelings of the elders by asking them directly how they felt about its value for our situation. I closed the discussion by pointing toward our next meeting and asking, "Does that sound like a good plan or can you think of some better way...?"

Analysis and Evaluation of the Meeting

My stated objectives in the lesson plan for the first meeting were (1) to describe the current formal organizational role functions - responsibilities or duties - and role relationships (with the congregation and the pastor) of the elders and (2) to explore and express the feelings of the elders present about the adequacy of this structural organization for fostering within our church the communication and cooperation that are necessary for an adequate witness of the Christian faith in our contemporary world. In addition, I also had a third, unstated, goal which I hoped would be reached through our discussion. This objective was: (3) Through the inclusion of the servant songs as background reading, there should be some focus of the discussion on II Isaiah's more inclusive concept of servanthood. My intention here was to set the stage for the discussion of the stated objectives by prior reflection on the subject of what a servant of God is like according to II Isaiah. In this way, the elders would ask themselves about their own self-identity as servants of God.

The analysis of the meeting will be an evaluation of: the ways in which my objectives were reached, the planned objectives which were not realized, and the actual consequences of the meeting.

The unstated objective about the concept of servant ministry almost immediately became the focus of the discussion. Opinions and ideas about this concept and "suffering" occupied three-quarters of the time we spent in "reflection" on the scripture (cf. pp. 172-175). Ken Arvin asked the crucial question (cf. p. 172) which sparked a consideration of the subject of suffering. Rev. Homer Hill compared the concept

of servanthood that was being discussed with Jesus' own concept of servanthood (cf. pp. 174-175). From here the focus moved to the situation of II Isaiah and the exiles. Bertha Hoeflin raised a theological question about God's "conquering" of the nations. My response to her was inappropriate (cf. p. 176). But this same question was raised again in the April meeting by Nelle Darby. My unstated objective was realized throughout the discussion of these topics. II Isaiah's concept of servant ministry was a focus both in the consideration of suffering and in considering the actual situation of II Isaiah and the exiles (cf. pp. 175-176). Also, as Christians, it was important that several times the topic of Jesus' concept of ministry was the focus (cf. pp. 172, 174). However, my hope that attention might have focused on our current global crisis and our own calling as servant ministers was not part of the discussion. This was not a planned objective, but rather a subject to which I thought the concept of servant ministry might lead us.

The first stated objective was accomplished in the responses to the first discussion question concerning the relationship of the elders with other church officers and committee chairpersons. The subject of the elders' relationships to the committees and their chairpersons dominated most of the discussion (cf. pp. 176-178). But the focus was changed to the elders' relationship to the church cabinet by Paul Stockwell (cf. p. 178). A background consideration throughout this discussion was the elders' responsibility for the "spiritual life" of our church (cf. pp. 178-179).

The first objective was also realized in the discussion of questions III and IV (cf. p. 163) concerning the relationship of the elders

to the pastor. The initial responses to question three focused on personal relationships to the pastor (cf. p. 179). Lucretia Uhrich changed the focus to the elders' role relationship with the pastor. A discussion of the possibilities and limits of sharing some of the pastor's many responsibilities followed (cf. pp. 179-184). The discussion of question IV involved the elders' role in communicating regularly with the pastor (cf. p. 184).

Questions three and four also achieved the second stated objective. Question three proposed the question of the ideal relationship between the elders and the pastor. Since the discussion focused on the sharing of the pastor's many duties in order to fulfill our own responsibilities, it elicited feelings about the adequacy of our current organization roles (cf. pp. 179-184). The fourth question proposed a change in the current structure of the elders and the pastor. The pastor emphasized that such a structural change should come from within the elders (cf. p. 184). Most of the feelings about such changes had come out in the discussion of the previous question. I believe it is fair to say that the elders felt that a regular time for "sharing" with the pastor was not necessary and that it should be done through personal relationship (cf. p. 184).

The final question discussed had to do with The Shepherd Plan (cf. pp. 184-186). This question fulfilled both stated objectives in that it focused attention on the elder's role responsibility to the congregation and also questioned the adequacy of our current structure. The discussion centered around the possibilities and limitations of implementing such a program (cf. pp. 185-186). Most of the elders felt that The Shepherd Plan could be adapted to our situation but that it

would take more time to work out the many details of planning.

I believe that both of my stated objectives were fully realized in the evening's discussion. The elders examined their role relationships with the church and expressed many feelings about the current needs of our church. Three general consequences of the discussion can be isolated. First, the elders seemed to agree that because of their participation on the committees, they had certain responsibilities to be aware of matters of "spiritual life" and to report these, as needed, to the elders (cf. pp. 176-179). Second, throughout the discussion of the third and fourth questions (cf. pp. 179-184), there seemed to be a growing acknowledgement by most present that we needed some better plan to both fulfill our own responsibilities as elders and to help shoulder the burden of the many pressures of the pastor. Third, The Shepherd Plan was favorably considered as a possible option in meeting some of the needs we had discussed. This consequence seemed to indicate that some more adequate, overall plan was needed in meeting our church needs.

I cannot point directly to instances which prove that the discussion of II Isaiah's concept of servant ministry directly effected these consequences. However, following the discussion of the scripture, the discussion of the elders seems at times to point to the concept of servant ministry. Some elders voiced feelings that this type of approach was necessary (cf. pp. 179, 181-184). Therefore, the concept of servant ministry had some influence on the elders and their consideration of their responsibility to the church as a whole.

Implementation of the Plan

In making preparations for the second meeting, I had to evaluate the consequences of the first meeting and decide what would be the most relevant subjects to consider next. To accomplish this task, I listened to the tape recording of the first meeting and wrote out a condensed transcript. From this transcript, I prepared a typed summary of the meeting. What emerged from this process was a feeling that we needed to clarify our role responsibility in a basic way. I felt we needed to come to some kind of common agreement about our definition of "spiritual life." Just what was it that we were responsible for? What was "spiritual life"? We should have some common understanding of what we would try to accomplish before we try to accomplish it. Another feeling that emerged was connected to one of the consequences of the first meeting. This consequence was the general feeling among many of the elders that some more encompassing plan was needed to fulfill our responsibilities and to meet the needs of the congregation and pastor. I decided that the two areas of importance for the next meeting were a common definition of "spiritual life" and further discussion and clarification of The Shepherd Plan.

According to my overall plan, I also needed to make a more direct application of my Creator-King, creation↔redemption, thesis to the second meeting. This was to be done by the reading of Isaiah 40-44:23 and of the explanation of these passages written by Leroy Waterman. As the first effort to implement my plan for the second meeting, I gave to each elder another copy of the first lesson plan along with the

typed summary of the meeting. I also included the explanation of Isaiah 40-44:23 given by Waterman and asked the elders to read these in preparation for the meeting. This packet of materials was provided two weeks before the second meeting. A week before this meeting, I sent to every elder a copy of the lesson plan. This plan included the two areas of importance that I have described above. The plan called for the discussion of II Isaiah and of "spiritual life" by clarifying the values of the elders. Part of the preparation for each elder was to imagine what it would have been like to be in II Isaiah's situation and also to write down a definition of "spiritual life."

I made a list of the materials that we would need for the second meeting. These included a large pad of paper and an easel to write our definitions of "spiritual life." I included a map of the ancient Near East to put up on the wall, so we could have a better picture of the journey that II Isaiah called his fellow exiles to make. I also included the diagram of our church's structural organization. I decided to arrange the tables so that we would sit facing each other. On the tables, I planned to place a number of Bibles for our reference. I gathered these things and assembled them for the meeting.

When the meeting began, I reviewed outloud my three objectives. Since our time had been cut short by business considerations, I moved immediately into the values clarification questions concerning II Isaiah. Before the responses began I called attention to the map of the ancient Near East that was on the wall so that we could have a better picture of II Isaiah's situation. I pointed to the area which Cyrus had conquered. Then I asked them how they responded to II Isaiah's message. This moved the emphasis from "back then" to II Isaiah's relevance "for

us." At the close of the discussion of these questions relating to II Isaiah, I quickly summarized my creation↔redemption thesis and pointed to passages from Isaiah 40-44:23 that illustrated the Creator-King's power.

Part II of the lesson plan called for each elder to give a definition of "spiritual life." As each definition was given, I wrote it on the large pad of paper so that all the elders could see them. When all the definitions were given, I tore this off and pinned it up so that we could condense all these definitions into one common definition.

The time remaining after arriving at the common definition would not have allowed us to finish both the question of the ways in which the present church structure is accomplishing this definition and the discussion of The Shepherd Plan. I elected to discuss The Shepherd Plan. During the discussion of The Shepherd Plan, I attempted to focus the discussion on specific adaptations that we would need to formulate, if we wanted to make the plan relevant for our own use.

Analysis and Evaluation of the Meeting

The objectives of the April 13, 1977, elders meeting were: (1) to elicit the response of the elders present to the message of II Isaiah and to his "opponents" by imagining what it was like to be in the situation of II Isaiah and his "opponents," (2) to clarify our own individual understandings of "spiritual life" and to begin to form some common conception of what the "spiritual life" of our church involves, (3) to discuss the present needs of our church, remembering our pastor and our responsibility as elders for "spiritual life," and to discuss the specifics of how we might adapt The Shepherd Plan (or alternatives)

to meet these needs.

The evaluation of the meeting will be made by comparing the stated objectives to how the objectives were actually realized and in what ways, to objectives which were not realized, and to the outcome or varied results of the meeting. The first objective is the aim of Part I of the procedure (cf. p. 170). These are values clarification questions concerning II Isaiah and his opponents among the exiles. The first question was intended to get us into a discussion of the situation of II Isaiah and the exiles. Walter Baker put himself in the situation and responded that he thought it would be hard to start again (cf. p. 187). Ken Arvin also responded and then the focus moved to a discussion of creation and redemption. Nelle Darby brought us back to II Isaiah near the end of this discussion. She brought up the question that Bertha Hoeflin had raised in the first meeting (cf. p. 176). This had to do with God as the controller of history who caused Cyrus to conquer the nations (cf. p. 188). She asked the question of how God controls history. Lucretia Uhrich suggested that God needs to work with people (cf. p. 188).

The second question was intended to elicit from the elders the response they would have made if they had been listening to II Isaiah and to his opponents. We spent some time clarifying what that situation would have been like (cf. p. 189). Most of the elders felt that they would not make the return. Nelle reminded us of II Isaiah's message of how great are God and his creation. Homer Hill pointed to the fact that some had returned (cf. p. 189).

The third question was intended to draw attention to our current world situation. Nelle felt we were in bondage to materialism and

needed to rejoice in II Isaiah's message (cf. p. 190). Lucretia felt that the challenge to move out from where you are is similar (cf. p. 190). Ken and most of the others agreed that there are a lot of idols around us (cf. p. 190). At this time, I presented to the elders my creation↔redemption thesis about the Creator-King. This was part of my overall plan and the way in which I directly connected my thesis to these meetings. Some discussion of the relationship of creation and redemption had taken place, so my explanation clarified the way in which II Isaiah had influenced me.

All of these responses accomplished the objective that I had established. I feel that the elders effectively put themselves in the situation of II Isaiah's time. In addition, they were able to make that situation relevant to our own time.

The second objective was the aim of Part II of the procedure (cf. p. 171). This was a values clarification discussion about the church's "spiritual life." Almost every elder present responded with his/her definition of "spiritual life." Every definition contained some form of participle or action word (cf. p. 191). All of the elders also helped to clarify and arrive at a common definition (cf. p. 192). Therefore, the second objective was also realized in this process of sharing and clarification. We began the process of arriving at a common definition.

The third objective was the goal of Part III of the procedure (cf. p. 171). This procedure was not intended to clarify values but to discuss the needs of the church and the possible ways to adapt The Shepherd Plan to meet those needs. The discussion of our current church needs did not take place. I believe, however, that the discussion about

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The Shepherd Plan, which did take place, assumed that there were needs in our church that the plan would fulfill. The discussion centered around how we might modify The Shepherd Plan so that it could be implemented. It was generally agreed that the elders should not adopt this plan as a body (cf. p. 192). It should also be voluntary, but that we would need to promote the confidence of volunteers. Homer Hill suggested we start out with a pilot plan on a low key basis (cf. p. 192). This suggestion was discussed and refined (cf. p. 193). Homer agreed to draw up the kind of plan we had discussed and bring the proposal to the next elders meeting in June (cf. p. 193). This procedure fulfilled the third objective because it elicited adaptations of The Shepherd Plan from the elders. Although the discussion did not clarify our current needs and responsibility for "spiritual life," I feel that all of the elders present sensed that it was necessary to take some action to meet our needs.

The action taken by the elders fulfilled the objective, and also my hope, that some kind of action would be taken as a result of these meetings. Whether the proposal will be approved by the elders in June cannot be foretold. But the action taken toward approving the kind of plan we discussed is one of the consequences of the meeting. Another consequence is the elders' common definition of "spiritual life" (cf. p. 192). Both the individual definitions and the common definition embodied an active sense of ministry. It was ministry shaped by a relationship with Jesus the Christ and directed toward our church family, other people and the world (cf. p. 192). I feel that this definition is analogous to the inclusive sense of servanthood that is found in II Isaiah. I cannot point to direct evidence, but I sense

that our discussion of II Isaiah's message and of creation and redemption had some influence on both the action taken and the active sense of ministry that emerged from the meeting.

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APPENDIXES

COMPARATIVE STRUCTURE ANALYSES OF II ISAIAH

	<u>StuhlmueUer</u>	<u>Westermann</u>	<u>Muilenburg</u>	<u>Watermann</u>	<u>Objections</u>
40	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-13	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-31 vs. 19-20	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-31	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-26 vs. 27-31	vs. 6-8 vs. 27-31
41	vs. 1-5 vs. 8-13 vs. 17-20	vs. 6-7 vs. 1-5 vs. 8-13 vs. 14-16 vs. 17-20 vs. 21-29	v. 1-- (1,2-4,5-7, 8-10,11-13 14-16,17-20, 21-24,25-29, 42:1-4)	vs. 1-13 vs. 14-29	vs. 14-16
42	vs. 8-9 vs. 10-13	vs. 1-4 vs. 5-9 vs. 10-13 vs. 14-17 vs. 18-25	v. --4 vs. 5-17 vs. 18-- (18,19-21, 22,23-24,25, 1-36,3c-5a, 5b-7)	vs. 1-16 vs. 18-25	vs. 14-16
43	vs. 1-7 vs. 8-13 vs. 14-15 vs. 16-21	vs. 1-7 vs. 8-15 vs. 16-21 vs. 22-28	v. --7 vs. 8-13 vs. 14-- (14-15,16- 17,18-19,20- 21,22-24,25- 28,1-2,3-4,5)	vs. 1-13 vs. 14-18	vs. 26-28
44	vs. 1-5 vs. 6-8 v. 23 v. 24	vs. 1-5 vs. 6-8 vs. 21-22 v. 23 vs. 9-20 vs. 24-28	v. --5 vs. 6-8 vs. 9-20 vs. 21-23 v. 24- (24-28,1-7, 8,9-13)	vs. 1-23 vs. 24-28	
45	v. 8 vs. 9-13 vs. 18-22	vs. 1-7 v. 8 vs. 9-13 vs. 14-17 vs. 18-19 vs. 20-25	v. --13 vs. 14-25	vs. 1-13 vs. 14-25	vs. 9-13
46	vs. 9-13	vs. 1-4 vs. 5-8 vs. 9-13	vs. 1-13	vs. 1-13	vs. 11-13
47		vs. 1-15	vs. 1-15	vs. 1-15	

	<u>Stuhlmueeller</u>	<u>Westermann</u>	<u>Muilenburg</u>	<u>Watermann</u>	<u>Objections</u>
48	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-19 vs. 20-21	vs. 1-11 vs. 12-17 vs. 18-19 vs. 20-21	vs. 1-22 vs. 1-22	vs. 1-21 vs. 1-21	
49	v. 13	vs. 1-6 vs. 7-12	vs. 1-26 (1-3, (4, 5ef) (5a-d, 6), 7, 8-9b, 9c-11, 13, 14-b, (18, 12), (17, 19), 20-1, 22-3, 24- 6)	vs. 1-6 vs. 7-12 vs. 13-26	vs. 14-18 vs. 19-23 vs. 24-26
50	vs. 1-2(3)	vs. 1-3 vs. 4-9 vs. 10-11	vs. 1-11	vs. 1-11	vs. 1-3 vs. 4-9
51	v. 3 vs. 9-10	vs. 1-2, 4-8 v. 3- v. 9-	vs. 1-16 (1-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-11, 12-4, 15-6) v. 17 (17-8, 19-20, 21-3, 1-2, 3-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12)	vs. 1-8 vs. 12-23	vs. 7-16 vs. 17-23
52	vs. 9-10	v. -3 vs. 4-6 vs. 7-10 vs. 11-12 v. 13	v. --12 v. 13- (13-15, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 10-12)	vs. 1-10 vs. 11-15	
53		v. -12	v. -12	vs. 1-12	vs. 1-10
54	vs. 1-3 vs. 4-6 vs. 7-10	vs. 1-10 vs. 11-17	vs. 1-17	vs. 1-17	
55	vs. 6-11	vs. 1-5 vs. 6-11 vs. 12-13	vs. 1-13	vs. 1-13	

CONTROL OF THE LIMITS OF THE WATER CYCLE LANGUAGE

40:7a grass withers, the flower fades
 40:8a grass withers, the flower fades
 40:12a measured waters in the hollow of his hand
 40:15a a drop from a bucket
 40:24c he blows upon them and they wither

 41:17a when the poor and needy seek water
 41:17c tongue is parched with thirst
 41:18a I will open rivers on the bare heights
 41:18b fountains in the midst of the valleys
 41:18c the wilderness a pool of water
 41:18d the dry land springs of water

 42:9c before they spring forth
 42:10c let those who go down to the sea, and all that fills it
 42:15c I will turn the rivers into islands and dry up the pools

 43:2a when you pass through the waters
 43:2b and through the rivers
 43:16b who makes a wat in the sea
 43:16c a path in the mighty waters
 43:19b I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth
 43:19d rivers in the desert
 43:20c for I give water in the wilderness
 43:20d rivers in the desert
 43:20e to give drink to my chosen people

 44:3a pour water on the thirsty land
 44:4a they shall spring up from in among grass
 44:4b like willows by streams
 44:12d he drinks no water and is faint
 44:14a he plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it
 44:22a swept away your transgressions like a cloud
 44:22b and your sins like mist
 44:27a who says to the deep, Be Dry!
 44:27b I will dry up your rivers

 45:8a shower, O, heavens from above
 45:8b and let the sky rain down righteousness
 45:8d righteousness to spring up also

 47:2d pass through the rivers

 48:18b peace would have been like a river
 48:18c righteousness like the waves of the sea
 48:21a they thirsted not when he led them
 48:21b water flow for them from a rock
 48:21c he cleft the rock and the water gushed out

49:10a they shall not hunger or thirst
49:10d and by springs of water will guide them

50:2d by my rebuke I dry up the sea
50:2f I make the river a desert
50:2g lack of water
50:2h and die of thirst

51:10a thou that didst dry up the sea
51:10b the waters of the great deep
51:10c depths of the sea a way
51:15b who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar

54:9b I swore that the waters of Noah

55:1a every one who thirsts
55:1b come to the waters
55:10a for as the rain and the snow come down
55:10b and does not return but waters the earth

B. LESSONS PLANS FOR THE ELDERS MEETINGS

Elders Meeting - February 9, 1977

Objectives: (1) To describe the current formal organizational role functions - responsibilities or duties - and role relationships (with the congregation and the pastor) of the elders of the Riverside Christian Church and (2) to explore and express the feelings of the elders present about the adequacy of this structural organization for fostering within our church the communication and cooperation that are necessary for an adequate witness of the Christian faith in our contemporary world.

Method and Materials: Discussion questions and background reading

1. Background scripture reading. (Please read the scriptures before other materials and in this order)

O.T.: Isaiah 40:1-14	50:4-9 3rd S.S.
:21-23	52:7-8 read "Your God is King"
:27-31	
42:1-4 1st Servant Song	52:13-53:12 4th S.S. read "because of" for "for" v. 5a,b
43:14-19	
45:1 read "Messiah (annointed)"	55:1-4
49:1-6 2nd Servant Song	

N.T.: Acts 20:20-36, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-5

2. Background reading in The Work of the Elders in the Christian Church (WECC), especially Chapter 3.

3. Chart of the present structural organization of our church.

4. Description of the present duties of the elders.

Development of Concepts:

As we consider the questions before us, several areas need explanation. Our objectives include giving a role description of the elders responsibilities and duties as well as discussing our role relationships. Our "scope of authority" is broad - "the spiritual life of the church." Do we have a common conception of what the spiritual life of our church involves? Do we have a common understanding of the overall plan or program objectives that presently guide the spiritual life of our church? Do we have common goals as we pursue our responsibility?

We must ask ourselves, "What authority have we been delegated in the formal organization of our church and what responsibilities do our present roles require?" In the language of formal organizations "responsibility" means obligation or "duty." The totality of obligations with their implied "duties" defines the "role" function. The basic function of our elders is to be responsible for the spiritual life of the whole congregation.

What authority have we been delegated for/over other functional areas in meeting this responsibility? What are the unwritten traditions of this authority?

What information relationships are we responsible for maintaining with these other areas? Which areas and officers is communication and cooperation required to carry out the church plans?

The terms "relationship" (Questions II-III), "program" (Question

IV), and "role" (Question V) appear in the questions to be considered. Actually, question 1 involves 'the relationship between the roles' of elders and other officers. Question 2 asks about 'the relationship between the roles' of the elders and the pastor. A "relationship" is a description of the cooperation needed to fulfill both role functions. These relationships many times go without formal definitions, but they should be consciously considered. After we have a sense of what our role relationships and responsibilities are, we may ask what they might be in striving for better communication and cooperation within our church family.

Guidelines for Discussion:

1. Remember in discussing the roles of elders, we are not asking about the "authority" of the elders versus the other officers or pastor. Nor are we here specifically to discuss the validity of current by-laws or procedures.
2. We are not focusing our discussion on the content of the chapters of WECC. If possible, it is to be read as background information leading to the specific questions for our discussion.
3. A lot of our discussion will be about the informal and unwritten traditions that have accumulated in the operation of our church up until today. There are bound to be many differences in the way we have experienced these unwritten relationships. There will be differences of understanding because there have been many ways.
4. During discussion, please speak directly to the question at hand. Don't digress; we're short on time. Please give each person

his/her own say without interruption.

Procedure: Discussion questions

I. Reflection and discussion on the scriptures. (20 min.)

II. Focus: formal organization. Resources: WECC Chapt. 2, p. 42.

Question 1.

What should be the relationship of the elders with the other officers of the congregation? Be specific. What responsibilities for better cooperation do the elders have toward committee chairpersons?

(20 min.)

III. Focus: formal organization. Resources: WECC Chapt. 5, pp. 78-9, Questions 1,4,3.

In seeking to increase mutual trust and communication between the pastor and ourselves, what is the ideal relationship between the elders and the pastor? This question could include responsibilities that the elders would be willing to share with the pastor. How can we increase communication and cooperation with our pastor? (20 min.)

IV. Focus: formal organization and congregation. Resources: Chapt. 3, p. 56, Questions 2,3.

In assisting in the development of mutual fellowship and concern among the members of the congregation, would the program of the church be strengthened if the elders met regularly with the pastor to consider the needs of individual members of the congregation and problems that the pastor is experiencing in his work? (20 min.)

V. Focus: formal organization. Resources: WECC Chapt. 6, p. 92, Question 4.

What functional areas are essential for an adequate witness of the Christian faith in our contemporary world? Reflecting on questions II-IV, explore the role responsibilities and relationships with these areas that might be appropriate for elders. (20 min.)

VI. Focus: congregation. Resources: WECC Chapt. 3, p. 56, Question 5.

Would the elders feel that there is value in some type of an under-shepherd plan being established in our church? Would you be willing to support such a plan personally? (20 min.)

Explanation of Isaiah 40-55

Isaiah 40-55 or "Second Isaiah" was composed by a man who was a member of the exiled community of Jews in Babylon. He lived and spoke sometime between Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judah in 587BC (Israel had fallen in 722 BC) and the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the Persian, in 538 BC. I feel that it was composed to be read as a sort of liturgy. In the process Second Isaiah answers objections to his overall understanding of the present historical situation (Cyrus about to conquer Babylon) and his vision of the possibility of being freed to return to Jerusalem. He calls this return the new Exodus (52:11-12). Second Isaiah is making a call for "servants" in Babylon to "...make straight a highway in the desert for our God." (40:3) to return and announce to Zion, "You God is King" (52:7, cf. Mk. 1:15). This was a hazardous journey and there were not many takers. From Ezra and Nehemiah we know that there was no massive arrival of exiles. In Second Isaiah's vision Yahweh is the King (43:15; 52:7), the Man of War

(40:10; 42:10-13), the Shepherd (40:11), the Creator who is causing all these things to happen. The King is also the Creator and explicit creation imagery is apparent and abundant throughout.

Elder's Duties

1. Presiding at the communion table.
2. Serving communion to shut-ins.
3. Distribution of information packets to new members.
4. Calling on the membership of the church.

Structural Organization

The formal organization of our church includes the congregation who elects the elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees; the official board; various departments (functional program) and committees (non-functional); the cabinet.

Elders Meeting - April 13, 1977

Objectives: (1) To elicit the response of the elders present to the message of II Isaiah and to his "opponents" by imagining what it was like to be in the situation of II Isaiah and his "opponents."

(2) To clarify our own individual understandings of "spiritual life" and to begin to form some common conception of what the "spiritual life" of our church involves.

(3) To discuss the present needs of our church, remembering our pastor and our responsibility as elders for "spiritual life," and to discuss the specifics of how we might adapt the Shepherd Plan (or alternatives) to meet these needs.

Methods and Materials: Background reading/discussion questions/values

clarification. (1) Background reading in preparation for part I:

Read Isaiah 40-44:23. Along with these verses, read the explanation given by Leroy Waterman in Forerunners of Jesus (from the top of p. 34 to p. 46). For a better understanding of II Isaiah and his situation, you could review the paragraph of explanation on the last page of the first lesson plan. While you are reading Waterman, give special attention to the objections (pp. 35,37,39,42,45) raised against II Isaiah's message about Cyrus (vs. 41:2-3,25-6; 45:1) and against his vision of being freed and being called to make the long return to rebuild Zion "for His own sake" (see 43:25f. and 42:1-4). In your own imagination, put yourself in the place of the exiles to whom II Isaiah was speaking. How would you feel about his message?

(2) Background preparation for part II: Reflect for a few

days on your own definition of "spiritual life." Write down whatever basic conception of "spiritual life" that comes to you when you think of the "spiritual life" of the church. Bring this definition to the meeting Wednesday night. This definition can be either descriptive - "Spiritual life is..." or it can be operational - "Spiritual life is when the church does...." It could be both.

(3) Background preparation of part III: Perhaps you will want to review the chapter on the Shepherd Plan in The Work of Elders in the Christian Church (pp. 43-56). Reflect on the needs of our church that we have discussed. How can we best meet those needs? Make a list of specific adaptations in the Shepherd Plan that would be necessary for our situation. List the ways in which you personally would be willing to help the pastor or to give time to the Shepherd Plan.

Procedure: Discussion questions and values clarification.

Part I: (30-45 minutes)

(1) How did you personally respond to the message of II Isaiah?

(2) As you read II Isaiah and considered the objections raised against his message, whose "side" were you on? Keep in mind that II Isaiah was a failure. His message won no great following among the exiles. No great multitude returned to Jerusalem after Cyrus conquered Babylon. Would you be objecting, too, or would you be ready to make the long journey at great personal sacrifice?

(3) Considering II Isaiah's emphases on the majesty and amazing character of this creation (see 40:12-17, 21-31) to talk about God

redeeming them from a situation of bondage and chaos, are there any similarities between our present world situation and that of II Isaiah and the exiles?

Part II: (45 minutes)

(1) What is the definition of "spiritual life" that you have written down? We will list all of these definitions so that all can see them and then attempt to arrive at some common consensus.

(2) If time permits we will list and discuss the ways in which the present church organization is accomplishing this definition.

COFFEE BREAK (15 minutes)

Part III: (45 minutes)

(1) Is the Shepherd Plan adaptable to our situation or is there a better way to meet the needs of our church? How would the Shepherd Plan have to be changed to meet our needs? Be specific. How would it have to be changed in order to allow for the areas in which you personally feel weak?

(2) If the Shepherd Plan is to work and be ongoing it (or an alternative) must have our full support. Would you be willing to support such a plan with your time and energy? In which areas would you be willing to help the pastor, if he needed it?

Remember this discussion of the Shepherd Plan in relation to the current needs of our church is still in the planning stage. We are not yet deciding on its actual adoption.

APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPT OF ELDERS MEETING--FEBRUARY 9, 1977

To begin the discussion, I reviewed the objectives, development of concepts, and guidelines for discussion that were stated in the lesson plan. Here I emphasized the cooperation and communication that are necessary in carrying out our responsibilities in the church.

Question I: Reflection and discussion of the scriptures.

Ken Arvin: Why did you pick out those particular passages for us to read? What's the connection? Obviously the servant songs were connected, but why those particular ones?

Kevin Clark: I'm doing my dissertation on Isaiah 40-55 and I have to tie it into a practical application in the church. The servant songs talked about a suffering servant and Jesus talked about himself in the same way. Jesus suffered and died for me is a basic kind of Christian confession. These servant songs have been important in relating to Jesus.

Ken: How are we going to relate to that in terms of our role as elders?

Kevin: In Acts Paul was talking about elders and suffering.

Roger Moore: Let's don't digress from the scripture you had us read.

Kevin: Yes, sir.

Lucretia Uhrich: He has Acts 20 as part of the scripture.

Roger: I was myself questioning about what does Isaiah have to do with all this. Now, you've clarified that this is what your dissertation is on. Why not other aspects?

Ken: How can we read Isaiah and help ourselves as elders?

Kevin: Elders are servants and are supposed to be persons of wisdom who set an example for the congregation. So, what is our self-identity?

Ken: Like in the servant song passages, should we be suffering as Christ did?

Kevin: It depends on what suffering means. It may not be the calling of each one of us today to die as martyrs. But, if we identify with Christ and his way, then his way isn't always easy and it may involve persecution or suffering. So we could think about our own identity as servants when reading these servant songs. Paul talks about this suffering in Acts. Paul saw himself and his servanthood as something which involved suffering in some way.

Ken: So, these servant song passages, we could relate to them in that we need to be steadfast and suffering--not to the point of losing your life, although it could reach that point. We should be an example.

Kevin: My basic feeling is that we should be examples. It's like being a teacher. A teacher models what he or she wants the students to learn or be. The best way to be a good teacher is to be a good learner. So the best way for elders to spread the spiritual life of the church is to be models of what they want that spiritual life to be.

Bill Hughes: But basically we all have different ways of analyzing things. We all have different philosophies in regard to what you may classify as the ideal. Your ideal may not be the same as mine. Therefore, I cannot change myself to meet your need and so on with every person who comes along. Then pretty soon, I'm nobody.

Kevin: I'm not asking you to do that.

Bill: My philosophy in regards to this is the idea that I have to be me. And, if I'm going to be a servant, then I don't have to suffer to be a servant. And I don't feel that I have to suffer to be a servant of Christ or to be an elder in this church. I have to be a servant, yes, but I don't have to suffer to be a servant. I know that sometimes a decision will have to be made that not all people will like. But I have to express my attitude at that time.

Kevin: I wouldn't want you to be anything but what you are.

Bill: O.K.

Ken: It's the definition of suffering. Even though a decision has to be made you would emphasize with the people that may not agree with it.

Bill: O.K., yes. There's empathy.

Ken: Exactly.

Homer Hill: I can recall when Bill was chairman of the elders one time that there was a very difficult decision that had to be faced. And, I think, this illustrates exactly what we're talking about, Bill. You were not unwilling to face that situation and become a part of of that. And there was suffering connected with that and you suffered.

Bill: You bet I did.

Homer: And you were willing to. That's the point that's being made here. The person who takes the way of Christ will take it in the face of the suffering that may need to come his way. It doesn't mean he's out to make a martyr of himself. In fact, Jesus himself asked to have the cup removed. He didn't want the suffering he knew that the cross would mean for him. But, because of his depth of commitment, he was willing to go all the way. What I saw in this was a--well, it may be because of my theological training, I saw in this something more than maybe the rest of you could see. Jesus identified himself with the prophetic movement of the Hebrew tradition. He did that at the very outset of his ministry. He did that verbally in Nazareth when he chose to read from the prophet Isaiah. It had to do with these very kind of things--that he would be a comfort to his people. He would release the captives and bring sight to the blind. He was to be a servant of the people. Jesus identified himself with this concept of servanthood and when his disciples thought the cost was too high, that's when he reprimanded them. He must go all the way. And going all the way brings about suffering many times. Do what you know is necessary and right to do. That's what I saw. I think Jesus was acquainted with these passages himself. He accepted them for himself as the kind of ministry which he was to fulfill. It was definitely to persons, not to institutions. He didn't want any part of the synagogue, though he respected them as places where the word of God should be made known. But, at the same time, his ministry was to people. And he chose to champion the cause of those who were

the poor, the underprivileged, the downcast and the outcast.

Paul Stockwell: Well, Homer, isn't that the purpose of the church to this very day--that it serve people rather than itself?

Bertha: I think so.

Kevin: Thank you, Homer. I think the word suffering brought up a few responses that we needed to talk about.

Walter Baker: Do you think that from the history of when this all happened during the exile. . .do you think he was telling them that this may not have happened if you would have done these things that we're talking about now?

Kevin: Yes, he did.

Walter: More than likely if they'd had this koinonia feeling that we're talking about now, this fellowship. More than likely they wouldn't even have been in exile.

Bill: This koinonia feeling didn't exist then and it doesn't exist now.

Lucretia: What do you mean it doesn't exist?

Bill: Well, because we don't have complete unity.

Lucretia: But it exists.

Bill: Amongst some people. But as a whole, it doesn't exist.

Kevin: As a complete community, Christians are not united.

Bill: That's right.

Walter: When I read this, I was thinking in my own mind that that's what it is all about. I think he was telling them, "If you had done what you should have done from the very beginning, we wouldn't be here now." They knew in advance that this would happen if they didn't change their ways. That's the way I read it.

Kevin: They were warned.

Walter: Yes. Now, he's telling them that they were warned and they can't get back to this pattern of life or it's not going to work again.

Kevin: Yes, he's calling servants to rebuild the temple and bring God's message to the nations. A light to the nations. But, they did have a fellowship. There was a big community of Jews in Babylon. They said, "Why has our punishment been so hard?" II Isaiah said that your father transgressed my ways and I made you fall.

Roger: I think where I was confused is that I didn't see where Isaiah tied into the eldership kind of thing. I could see it as clarifying Christ's role to the Jews. But the confusion was that I didn't see Isaiah tying into our objectives here. Isaiah used this battle language and maybe they didn't understand what he was saying.

John Canty: Neither did I.

Bertha: That is the part that I puzzled over--the nations will be conquered. I could see the attributes of every Christian. It says he will be gentile. He will encourage those who are down-trodden. He will fulfill justice. All of these things and, of course, the message of bringing the good news of salvation. But that part about the conquering of the nations.

Kevin: What scripture are you referring to?

Bertha: The part about proving my power by conquering the nations.

Kevin: In ancient times the Jews had a different concept of God. To be "man of war" meant God conquered chaos and that wasn't easy. It means he's creator.

Question II: What should be the relationship of the elders with the other officers of the congregation? What responsibilities for better cooperation do the elders have toward committee chairpersons?

Kevin: I'd like to begin the discussion by asking Ken to respond to that and then perhaps others that have been the chairman could respond. What other committees did you have to deal with and what did you have to keep in mind?

Ken: I have dealt with Chuck as chairman of the board and Dan as chairman of the worship department. I haven't really met with the other chairpersons, informally or formally. It appears to me that the chairman of the elders functions very loosely. I really didn't get any indoctrination. I saw how Roger worked last year and he gave me some suggestions. I tried to follow those and do some of my own things. Perhaps I should work more closely with the chairman of outreach or community involvement.

Kevin: Roger, could you tell us of your experience.

Roger: The first thing to do is read the bylaws. In our situation it is the congregation who is the final authority. The board makes decisions. There's a difference between what the New Testament elders did and what we do under our present structure. Under the functional departments the elders have a responsibility for a certain phase of church life, but they don't run the church. You have to work within the bylaws.

Kevin: It would be a mistake for us to try to run everything.

Roger: You don't want it to be a power struggle.

Kevin: Which are the essential departments you found yourself working with most? And how can we help you?

Roger: I was sort of an ex officio member of the worship committee so we didn't get information second hand. That way I was involved.

Nelle Darby: Your question is about all the elders not just the chairman. Each elder is on some committee. So each elder has a different responsibility. Each elder is a member of some committee.

Kevin: So, you're saying we each have direct input to committee life?

Nelle: Yes.

Chuck: Most of the department chairmen come from the elders.

Bertha: I feel that we are protecting the interests that the elders feel.

Roger: You do go into the committee with the guidelines of elders and try to live by those the best you can. Not to dominate church life.

Kevin: So, basically we're saying that we have a great continuity not only with the board, but we serve on the committees. So, on these committees we help make policy. Do we need an elder on every committee to bring back to us what's important? I'm trying to get at this question of communication and cooperation.

Walter: Just being an elder you have to be an awfully good listener. You can't express your own feelings all the time. You have to be close to the minister. If you don't it doesn't work. You have to weigh everything that's said to you in such a way that the person's not going to feel hurt for telling you something. And then you have to have it in all confidence.

John: An ex officio member on every department isn't needed.

Ralph Moore: The chairperson will ask for help if he needed it. You could go to past chairmen and ask for advice.

Bertha: I see these departments as being a training ground.

Kevin: But I'm interested in the listening and personal contact.

Because we are responsible for spiritual life, could we go to the chairmen and ask what the problems are?

John: But we don't need an ex officio elder on every committee to be a watchdog.

Homer: It would be possible for a department to not have an elder on it, but very unlikely. I would think the chief role of an elder on a department should be, if he detected something which was of real spiritual concern, he should feel free to say, "Perhaps we ought to take this matter to the board of elders." He could then be liaison. Is that dealing with the question you had in mind?

Kevin: Exactly.

Homer: The committees are pretty well represented here tonight.

Paul: There is another route for this information and that is the cabinet meeting. I don't think there's any fear of communication between a chairman and the elders. If they need help from the elders, they should ask.

Homer: The cabinet is a place where all the chairmen and some elders are, so, if an issue came up, it would be referred to the elders. This cabinet should be the place where these concerns could come out.

Bertha: Once an elder has served, they don't just lay aside their concern for spiritual life and should be mindful of the nurture.

Roger: The elders should be the teachers and train people for the leadership roles.

Kevin: How do we keep the people on the committees motivated? If we're responsible for the spiritual life of the church, we should be concerned about a lot of things. How active people are and. . .

Ken: Well, one problem is that the church is not a full time job for most of us. Many of us come here to be ministered to. I thought that one way to motivate would be by example and I have assumed different responsibilities that I thought would motivate

others. But I don't think that was a proper way to do it because I haven't seen a lot of fruits from that.

Oscar: But how about the spiritual life of the church? I don't think the people are getting as much as they should get of the studying of the Bible. Maybe if the elders and deacons got behind a Bible study. They have fallen on its face before. Would that motivate the people? There would have to be a group behind it to support it.

Kevin: You're getting at the spiritual life of our church. How do we nurture it so it grows?

Roger: It's like the old ideal in salesmanship. You have to be sold on your product. If you're enthusiastic, you'll sell. Let's go back to when David started the Tuesday evening Bible studies. David had that ability.

Kevin: I'm gonna have to call this question to a close. I like what most of you have said. If we are on these committees, then what are our responsibilities if we are to nurture the spiritual life of our church? That's something we can continue to think about. Maybe something like Oscar suggested.

Question III: What is the ideal relationship between the elders and the pastor?

Kevin: I have asked Homer to speak about his feelings a little later, but I would rather hear from the elders first.

Bill: You have to be honest with yourself and with the pastor. When we have not seen eye to eye, then I sit down and talk with him. We explain how we feel and so have a common ground. That's my responsibility as an elder.

Ken: When I first met with Homer I hedged, I couldn't come out and say, "I heard this. . ." But since that time, I have and I've always gotten the straight dope from Homer. We have shared honest feelings. I think that very open communication is best.

Kevin: I think honest communication is very important.

Lucretia: Can I go into another area? From being a secretary in two churches, it's evident to me that it's impossible for pastors to

do everything that they're called on to do. It's just physically impossible. From what I can observe, you're never done. The pastor should feel that the elders could help him if he needs help. Often pastors feel reluctant to assist in some of these things. The pastor, if he's wise, could pick out some things that the elders could help him in. If the elders are wise, they would have a relationship where they feel comfortable doing this.

Kevin: What are some of those kinds of things?

Lucretia: There are times when people want to see their pastor. But there are times when elders could express the caring part. Like a call on shut-ins. If some other person in the church family could stop and say we care about you.

Walter: I would imagine being a minister is probably one of the loneliest people in the world. Whenever you could be a friend to he and Lois, it would probably be the best thing that you could do for him.

Lucretia: Exactly right.

Walter: And I know we fall short of it. And I know how he must feel. It must be an awfully lonely world. I expect him to be on the ball all the time and yet I'm not there, and it has to be rough. You can imagine what his wife's going through. I think we should be a little bit more observing of this.

Roger: With all the people that approach him with problems, that's quite a demand on him.

Oscar: If we could have a meeting once a week with a group of elders, say for a half hour, he'd get to know us better and be more apt to call on us to help him if he needed it.

Bill: There's times when people want the pastor. If that is the case, then that's the pastor's responsibility. Now, if there is some other kind of task, then it behooves all of us to do that; to take some of that burden away from him.

Kevin: O.K. Homer, let's get your reflection now. What are the kind of things we could help you with? That you would want to share.

Homer: Well, first I'd like to say that whenever we have a new chairman of the elders, I try to talk a little bit about my desire to

have the elders be a constant source of feeding the concerns of the life of the church to me. Even suggestions and points of criticism. I want to hear those. I want for you to communicate to me whether it be a personal or group situation. Concerns that I ought to know about. I feel closer to you really than any other group in the church. I feel constantly the need for you to be bringing to me the things that will help me be a better servant in the life of the church. So far as particular programs, these need to grow out of the felt needs of the elders themselves. Maybe the elders could be a reservoir for needs in the functional departments. The functions the the elders have is seeing that the spiritual services of the church are taken to people who are in particular need--ill, can't come or bereavement. I think in the case of bereavement that that needs to be a natural thing. There's no need for a strange elder to go into the home of someone he doesn't know and to try and bring comfort, at a time of bereavement, is a pretty awkward situation.

Lucretia: How would he be strange if he was in the church family?

Homer: Someone that you don't know.

Walter: That just happened this year. The chairman came to me and asked who should go see this man and I told him.

Lucretia: Yeah, it's good to be selective. But I was just talking about what it said in the chapter. About the role of elder and pastor. It said that there is so much pressure on the pastor. The elders have to be a valve to relieve some of that. You just can't go like that all the time.

Homer: I do call on the elders when I'm going to be away. Like next week, I'll be away and I think that's important to know and be prepared for. I, as the minister, don't feel that I should be laying on you lots of heavy burdens to carry all of the time.

Lucretia: Would you be reluctant to share that with us if you felt pressured?

Homer: No, I wouldn't.

Lucretia: That's my point.

Bertha: I see it as an extension of Homer not as a replacement in any sense.

Lucretia: Exactly right.

Bertha: Because Homer can't do all that people would welcome. Everything you do is very welcome, but they would welcome more than one person can do.

Homer: I think one of the unique ways we Disciples have to do this is our observance of the Lord's Supper. An elder can take it out to people and they do the first Sunday of every month and I think that's a tremendous service. One reason we have the elders calling every month is to extend the ministry of the church. I think if you're thinking of structuring other things, perhaps the time has come when we ought to think of having some kind of shepherding program sorta like the one that is mentioned in this book. Perhaps each elder could be in charge of a cluster of families and contact them some way to see if the services of the church might be more effectively ministered in that way than all of it falling on one person who just can't get to see everybody that often.

Kevin: That's what we've been trying to get to. A little earlier I thought you were saying that the communication to you of church news was the most important thing and there wasn't anything specific that you wanted to share. Now I hear you saying that it would be a good thing to help you call on the other members in the church. Is that. . .

Chuck: Yeah, but he's also saying that only if that develops from within us. He doesn't want to come to us and say, "I think you ought to have a shepherding program and it ought to be such and such and so and so." For that kind of an idea to be valuable and one which would be something which is handled in the future, it must be something that grows from within and blossoms and isn't dictated.

Bertha: But, Homer, don't you when there is a death, don't you get in touch with the deaconesses? Isn't there a contact made there? They may not be personally acquainted and yet that offer is made. Is it not?

Homer: Yes.

Bertha: And so I think people appreciate the intention whether they accept the offer or not. Well, I've thought for a long time, and

I heard it being said here tonight, Ken, that maybe if Homer contacted you and you and he could talk and see who on the elders might know the family who could be notified. And I think any of us would respond to that. If you felt it was appropriate.

Ken: Obviously that's something we need to get into more. I have written letters personally in cases of bereavement. The worship assistant for that month is supposed to do that, but it hasn't been done, so I've done it. The way I look at it is, I've brought it up a couple times but no one has followed through with it.

Bertha: But what I'm saying is a telephone call would let that person go in person. And if I read about it in the Christian ten days or two weeks later. . . And I realize it's a little bit more of a process here, but you two could make suggestions.

Ken: Well, I asked Walter in the case of Don Vanderzyl's family.

Bertha: That was a good idea.

Ken: I agree with what you're saying, Bertha, that we do need some more comprehensive plan than we have now. We can't expect Homer to do all of it. We're not fulfilling our responsibility.

John: I also agree that in many cases people would much rather have the pastor. Especially in bereavement.

Bertha: I'm just saying people would welcome someone besides the minister.

Kevin: Since this must come from within the elders, I hear several of us saying that perhaps there is a need for us to help share with the minister some of the duties he can't perform. I really feel the need to do something like that. Somehow for us to share the things that I know that you have to do. If we felt the need ourselves to do that. Are there some more people who might agree with that? It may be that we could all help in different ways.

John: I don't feel comfortable with bereavement.

Kevin: O.K., you shouldn't be forced into that.

Nelle: You act as an individual who's concerned. In bereavement, you just write and tie it into whatever contact you've had with that person. There's always a way, almost, for you to tie yourself to some relationship with this person. But everybody has a different

talent. You say this isn't yours, but there's something else you can do. I think we have to let the minister know what we like to do and that he can call on us.

Ken: I think we need a more comprehensive plan. I think most all agree to that.

Kevin: O.K., maybe that's one of the kind of things we could reflect on for the meeting in April. Let's be thinking about a plan for next time and in the mean time might jot down those areas in which you might help Homer. We have to get on to the next question.

Question IV: Would the program of the church be strengthened if the elders met regularly with the pastor?

Homer: I think that any structural program that is set up must come from within the elders. I don't want another program created that I have to run. Do you see what I'm saying?

Lucretia: That isn't what I was talking about.

Homer: So, if the elders want to set up a shepherd program, then I think the elders ought to set it up. I could be a resource person.

Kevin: What about having a time during each elders meeting when the pastor could share with the elders problems he's experiencing?

Bertha: I think he already does.

Walter: You missed my point too. I think we ought to be cohesive enough that Homer knows he can call on us as a friend and not as an elder. We could do these things together.

Kevin: I see what you mean.

Roger: But we must remember that Homer does not want to head up another structure.

Question VI: Would the elders feel that there is value in some type of an under-shepherd plan being established in our church?

Kevin: The shepherd plan. It's something Homer brought up and several others. Our book proposes it. What do you think about it?

Ken: Didn't the elders do that a couple or three years ago?

Walter: But that wasn't the same type of thing. It was something David had.

Homer: We've done a number of different things, but nothing like this.

Walter: That was leaders in the church, not the elders.

Kevin: Have we ever had anything like this, Homer?

Lucretia: We talked about it off and on.

Homer: Yeah, we talked about it.

Kevin: Now, you did say that you talked about it with Chuck and Ken?

Chuck: We touched on it last summer.

Kevin: What was the feeling at that time?

Homer: Well, they just listened. It was just something we were kicking around.

John: Well, that food for thought maybe we can discuss it at the next meeting.

Walter: The shepherd plan is much different than what we had before.

Kevin: How do you feel about the shepherd plan?

Walter: I think the shepherd plan would be real great. I think it would come closer to doing what we're talking about than anything else.

Kevin: How do some of the rest of you feel?

John: It would have to be a total commitment.

Kevin: How do you feel about it? Would it help our church?

John: I don't know.

Kevin: The book discusses husband and wife teams.

Chuck: How many families do we have in the church?

Kevin: I counted them in the directory and there were two hundred and forty-six. If there are twenty elders that would be about. . . twelve per elder.

Bertha: You'd need a smaller group than that to be effective.

John: I don't think I have twelve nights open for the remainder of the year.

Kevin: What if a shepherd saw a family per week?

Walter: I don't think the shepherd plan calls for that. You might see your families on Sunday. They know who you are.

Kevin: That sounds valid to me.

Homer: I think we ought to use the telephone too. Anything like this to get a contact.

Kevin: We're saying personal contact is involved somehow. For next time be thinking about the shepherd plan. Does that sound like a good plan or can you think of some better way that we might address the spiritual life of our church? That's the kind of question I want to leave you with.

APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPT OF THE ELDERS MEETING--APRIL 13, 1977

The objectives of the elders meeting on April 13, 1977, were: (1) To elicit the response of the elders present to the message of II Isaiah and to his "opponents" by imagining what it was like to be in the situation of II Isaiah and his "opponents," (2) To clarify our own individual understandings of "spiritual life" and to begin to form some common conception of what the "spiritual life" of our church involves, and (3) To discuss the present needs of our church, remembering our pastor and our responsibility as elders for "spiritual life," and to discuss the specifics of how we might adapt the Shepherd Plan (or alternatives) to meet these needs.

Part I--Question 1: How did you personally respond to the message of II Isaiah?

Bertha Hoeflin: I found it hard to understand.

Ken Arvin: I did, too.

Walter Baker: Thinking about being a person back then and of what had happened when we were taken from Jerusalem, I would be afraid and not so sure we could go back and start again.

Ken: Many of them were settled and economically secure and were not ready to go back.

Homer Hill: I thought of modern-day Zionism and the re-establishment of Israel. The process of redemption is a creative process. You can't have redemption without creation. If we are Christians, we must first be redeemed. We must see within us the capacity of becoming. Be repentance, we throw off that which is keeping me from becoming. By repenting, we are open to the opportunity for creation. God, through redeeming the waste and void, created.

When God redeems the possibility of new creation is there.

Ken: Creation and redemption is an ongoing thing every day in our lives.

Bertha: AS the world is changing now, in creation back then, I think of the great upheaval which took place.

Kevin Clark: Was that also redemption? That's the question for me.

Ken: At the time the earth was formed, was that redeeming the earth? Is that what you mean?

Kevin: Yes.

Nelle Darby: The creation of the earth wasn't in a moment. It was a growing changing process which is still changing.

Oscar Lamb: All things are atoms which were made and given life by God.

Nelle: It's important to think of the faith it took to believe that Cyrus was the agent of God who is in control of history. But when we read of all the devastation of the nations, we have to ask if II Isaiah was right. Was it really God who caused Cyrus to come in and conquer or was it happenstance? Does God work this way in history? We know that II Isaiah's faith that the future would be assured beyond description did not work out. They had continual suffering and problems after they came home. This poses a great question of how God controls history. Does He allow all the carnage that happens?

Lucretia Uhrich: Does God control history or does he need to work with people?

Kevin: II Isaiah calls Cyrus God's Messiah and, in contrast, paints a picture of God's servant, Israel.

Question 2: As you read II Isaiah and considered the objections raised against his message, whose side were you on? Would you be objecting, too, or would you be ready to make the long journey at great personal sacrifice?

Nelle: Walter has already answered and I agree with him. I wouldn't go back.

Bertha: I kept thinking as I read the exiles arguments, we give lip service today, but we don't act to prove we believe what we say we

do.

Ken: Would you run into II Isaiah if you lived in that day?

Kevin: I believe you would. He was going all around the Jewish community speaking and talking to them and hearing their objections. Also, he must have been connected very intimately with their worship because many of the lines are taken from the language of the psalms. That's what makes it such great poetry.

Ken: How many years?

Kevin: We don't know, but Cyrus had been on the rise for a number of years.

Ken: Did II Isaiah have plenty of opposition?

Kevin: Yes.

Ken: Was the situation of the Germans to decide for or against Hitler similar to what was going on in Babylon? Would there be such diverse opinions among the people? Would the decision about II Isaiah's message be so hard to reach?

Oscar: The Jews probably didn't want to go back to the dry, arid land and the heat.

Walter: (to Ken) If people of our similar ages had been talking, my understanding is that the learned persons among the Jews were so abused when they were taken from Jerusalem that they wouldn't become politically or socially outspoken again. If I were them, I wouldn't object to much of anything again. I think they had a hard time. I may not even talk about Cyrus.

Nelle: So much of II Isaiah's message is about the nature of God. He's pointing out how great God's creation is and that the exiles don't understand Him.

Homer: But there were those who had faith and wanted to return.

Kevin: Making this personal, the general feeling that I'm getting is that if you were in Babylon listening to II Isaiah, you would not go back.

Lucretia: I wouldn't be ready to leave.

Ken: It would depend on what type of personality he had.

Kevin: II Isaiah also had to work against people who said, "So what if Cyrus is coming? We're going to wait for God's Messiah before we move." They were willing to go back, but wanted a Messiah from

within their ranks.

Ken: Does II Isaiah mean the Messiah or a Messiah?

Kevin: The Messiah.

Homer: Would the concept of the Messiah in Jesus' day be the same kind of concept? I think it would not be the same.

Nelle: The concept of Messiah changed so much over the years.

Question 3: Are there any similarities between our present world situation and that of II Isaiah and the exiles?

Nelle: We're in a bondage to materialism to the point where we accept the society's standards about us. This is bondage for the redeemed person who wants to be freed from all this and who wants to live a more simple life. There is another message here is the greatness of God and his creation. We need to rejoice in II Isaiah's message.

Lucretia: The challenge to move out from where you are is similar.

Ken: Also the challenge of other religions today--the Moonies and Scientology.

Kevin: We're saying there are a lot of idols around us.

Ken and others: Yes.

Kevin: I would like now to tell you a little about my thesis. My thesis is that the God portrayed in II Isaiah is a Creator-King. This Creator-King model was taken over very early in Israel's history. The Creator-King has the power of creation - redemption. That is creation and redemption are not the same, but creation and redemption are both mutually implied in the same act of God. So, even at this moment we can speak of God's creating - redeeming. They are not two separate acts of God. They are not temporally separate, as if God created "back then" and redeems now. This kind of power is illustrated in II Isaiah, when God controls the extremes of the water cycle. Water is the thing which even today interrelates the seas, the sky, and the earth. Now, we are faced with drought in the West and abundant snow in the East. Read Isaiah 41:17-20; 42:15-16; 43:2-3, 19-21; 44:3-4. This is also the same God who, in the exodus event described in Exodus 15:1-18,

both creates and redeems a people in the same act. So, very early in Israel's history they thought of God as Creator-King. My problem has been that many scholars would say that creation and redemption came together only late in Israel's history. So, as you said, Homer, they go together. This is the way I feel we should read the Bible. I have adapted Loren Fisher's thesis. I think that most of you know Loren is a Disciple of Christ minister who taught at the School of Theology.

Part II--Question 1: What is the definition of "spiritual life" which you have written down?

Bertha: Spiritual life is an active relationship with God.

Homer: Capturing and utilizing the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Bertha: Dedication to the cause of Christ.

Nelle: Continuing effort to be in tune with God. Jesus Christ helps us.

Lucretia: Nurturing our personal relationship with God through Jesus.

Kevin: Creation and nurture of a mutual ministering between all the members of the church family in Christian love (Jesus), so that the church program and members may become better servants in bringing justice to and caring for God's world.

Paul Stockwell: Taking on the life of Christ, so that he lives in us and we sacrifice our own selves to him.

Lucretia: Taking on the characteristics of Jesus.

Walter: Sharing fellowship for the love of God and Christ.

Kevin: What's the common denominator of all these?

Bertha: I think that Homer's definition of utilizing the spirit of Christ is like serving in the world. Those two summarize spiritual life.

Nelle: You notice all of these have a participle. All of us accept this active sense. Spiritual life in a vacuum without ministry isn't true.

Homer: God is active in working in us.

Kevin: It seems we can all agree that whatever definition we use it will be an active kind of involvement with life and Jesus.

The definition which the group of elders agreed on is: The spiritual life of the church is the nurturing of personal relationships with Jesus Christ, so that, by taking on his character, we can minister to each other, to all other people, and to the world.

Part III--Questions 1 and 2: Is the Shepherd Plan adaptable to our situation or is there a better way to meet the needs of our church? How would the Shepherd Plan have to be changed to meet our needs? Would you be willing support such a plan with your time and energy?

Bertha: The Shepherd Plan holds some wonderful possibilities, but it would have to be a voluntary kind of thing. I don't think it could be just laid on the elders.

Nelle: Briefly, what does it involve?

Paul: Would we be responsible for the spiritual life of those families? Are there guide lines set up?

Kevin: Yes, read pages 50-52 in The Work of Elders in the Christian Church. Would it be possible to ask the Deacons and Deaconesses to be shepherds?

Homer: I don't think we should ask any other group. It should be people who are freely willing to take on the responsibility. There are many who could do it effectively, but they would have to be committed.

Kevin: It sounds as though we're saying the elders shouldn't take this on as a body.

Most all: Yes.

Bertha: Somebody will have to oversee it. Maybe the elders could do that.

Homer: Maybe in the coming year's structure the elders could sponsor it. We could tie into the rest of the church structure like the department of membership.

Bertha: We'd have to sell it to others by giving them confidence.

Homer: Maybe we could start the Shepherd Plan slowly with an initial contact and then a few months later make a visit.

Bertha: One suggestion was to contact people before special times of

the year.

Kevin: I thought it was unnecessary to keep cards and records of each visit.

Nelle: But that is often helpful to see that people carry through.

The minister could look at those cards to see what's happening.

Paul: Maybe, if we don't have the cards, there could be several head-shepherds to oversee the shepherds. If someone could check up, it would keep the program moving.

Kevin: If you really make friends with the people, you're more likely to keep in touch. How would we have to allow for the areas where a shepherd felt weak?

Homer: He should contact somebody else and not be forced into it.

Walter: It's not a short term thing. Maybe we should have a test team and try it out for awhile.

Bertha: I'd like to cut the number of families down to four or five. Try the test team on some of the new members.

Paul: That's a good idea.

Bertha: Try the test team with the new members and gradually work in others.

Kevin: Would someone be willing to get together a team to start the Shepherd Plan or do we want to talk about it again next time when more elders may be here and in the mean time talk to others?

Nelle: I think there should be more here to make a decision.

Homer: Suppose I were to work out the details for a trial Shepherd Plan for a six months period and then bring that to the next elders meeting in June?

Nelle: Do we want to wait that long to do it?

Homer: We're talking about a pilot program for six months. If we seek, between now and June, some volunteers to work on a pilot basis, we can bring it before the elders at the next meeting. We could give these shepherds five names and they could carry out the program for six months and then report back to the elders. I'll direct it for those six months and see how it works out.

All: We agree.

Homer: If we do this sort of low key for six months, there may be

others who want to get in on it.

All of the elders present agreed with this plan.